



Security Council

Sixty-eighth year

Provisional

6915th meetingTuesday, 5 February 2013, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kim Sook (Republic of Korea)

Members:

Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
Australia	Mr. Quinlan
Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
China	Mr. Tian Lin
France	Mr. Briens
Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
Russian Federation	Mr. Ilichev
Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
Togo	Mr. M'Beou
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Shearman
United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S/2013/26)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

13-22417 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President: I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Mohammad Masood Khan, Permanent Representative of Pakistan, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of January 2013. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Khan and his team for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S/2013/26)

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Permanent Representative of Brazil, in her capacity as the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2013/26, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country.

I now give the floor to Mr. Zerihoun.

Mr. Zerihoun: I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to introduce the Secretary-General's report on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (UNIOGBIS) (S/2013/26).

The progress report that is before the Security Council provides an update on major developments in the country and on the progress made by UNIOGBIS in the implementation of its mandate. There have been some political developments since the report was issued, on 11 January, and I would like to take this opportunity to update the Council on some of them. Following a meeting of its Central Committee on 13 January, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) decided to sign the political transition pact and the political agreement signed between the junta and 17 political parties on 16 and 18 May. Subsequently, on 17 January, the PAIGC and four other political parties — the Democratic Alliance, the Democratic Convergence Party, the New Democracy Party and the United Social Democratic Party — also signed those transitional instruments, which, it will be recalled, they had rejected the previous May. Since then, the PAIGC has appealed to the Transitional President, Serifo Nhamadjo, and the international community to rapidly facilitate the formation of an inclusive transitional Government emanating from the Parliament.

The signing should facilitate the Parliamentary Commission's review of the political transition pact and the political agreement, as well as the drafting of a new transitional regime pact. It is also expected to facilitate consensus on a transitional road map that would, inter alia, clarify the revised modalities for the transition, including its duration, as well as the timeline for the presidential and legislative elections and the voter registration system. It is also important for the people of Guinea-Bissau to arrive at a consensus on the remaining national priorities during the transition and to create an environment conducive to peaceful elections and long-term stability after the elections are completed.

The Central Committee of the PAIGC, which remains the major political party in Parliament, also agreed on 13 January that the party's ordinary congress should be convened in May 2013 to elect new leadership. The former Executive Secretary of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), Mr. Domingos

Simões Pereira, and the former Minister of Public Administration and Civil Service in the deposed Government, Mr. Aristides Ocante da Silva, have since officially announced their candidatures. The deposed Prime Minister, Mr. Carlos Gomes Júnior, has also hinted at his intention to run for leadership of the party.

Notwithstanding the positive efforts to ensure inclusiveness in the transition process, impunity remains a major problem. There is a general atmosphere of fear within the population arising from the recent cases of beatings, torture and intimidation that continue to restrict freedom of assembly and of information. So far, none of the individuals involved in the killings and beatings that followed the attack on the Bissalanca air force base in Bissau on 21 October have been brought to justice, although investigations into the alleged counter-coup have reportedly been concluded and submitted to the Military Court. Visits by UNIOGBIS to prisons and detention centres have confirmed inadequate detention conditions and detainees' lack of access to medical care, food and water. The mission has advised the Ministry of Justice of the situation.

At the regional level, following their extraordinary summit on 19 January in Abidjan, the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) expressed their commitment to accompanying Guinea-Bissau in accomplishing the tasks of the transition process, including urgent multisectoral reforms and the holding of inclusive, free, fair and transparent elections in the course of the transition. They directed the President of the ECOWAS Commission to take all the appropriate measures to expedite action to commence the implementation of the defence and security sector reform programme. They also reiterated their call on the African Union to urgently consider the recognition of the ongoing transition and the lifting of sanctions against Guinea-Bissau, and urged the United Nations, the CPLP, the European Union (EU) and other international partners to resume cooperation with Guinea-Bissau and support efforts aimed at ensuring a more inclusive transition in the country.

Council members will recall that a joint African Union-CPLP-ECOWAS-EU-United Nations assessment mission visited Bissau between 16 and 21 December. At a consultative meeting on the situation in Guinea-Bissau held in Addis Ababa on 26 January, on the margins of the African Union Summit, senior officials representing the five organizations agreed that the

report of the mission should be submitted to the relevant organs of their respective organizations, in order to promote convergence in their appreciation of the progress made, and to enhance prospects for coordinated contributions to the resolution of the crisis in Guinea-Bissau. The Secretary-General looks forward to receiving the mission's recommendations, and the United Nations stands ready to cooperate with its partners in implementing initiatives conducive to sustainable solutions to the crisis, consistent with international standards and principles.

The new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of UNIOGBIS, Mr. José Ramos-Horta, will arrive in Bissau to assume his duties in the next few days. He has commenced consultations with the relevant international stakeholders, including the CPLP and ECOWAS member States. The conclusions of the review exercise being carried out by the United Nations family to help address the key drivers of instability in Guinea-Bissau will inform the work of the new Special Representative as he continues his consultations with national and international stakeholders. As recommended by the Secretary-General in his report to the Council, Mr. Ramos-Horta will also conduct an assessment of the situation in Guinea-Bissau and, together with the United Nations country team and other relevant actors, will formulate proposals for the mandate of UNIOGBIS. That exercise should be finalized by the completion of the three-month extension of UNIOGBIS's mandate requested by the Secretary-General.

The continued lack of civilian control and oversight over the defence and security forces and the continuing attempts by some politicians to manipulate the military for sectarian benefit remain matters of grave concern. They hamper the effective functioning of State institutions and highlight the urgent need to radically change the way in which politics is conducted in the country, as well as the imperative need for fundamental reform of the defence, security and judicial sectors.

Moving forward, stakeholders must make progress, through the Parliamentary Commission, on developing consensus on a national road map for the transition. That should entail the formation of an inclusive transitional Government and the steps necessary to ensure a peaceful transition, fair and transparent presidential and legislative elections and stability during the post-election period. Progress will further depend on the sustained political will of national stakeholders and

a spirit of compromise and genuine inclusion. The finalization of such a road map will undoubtedly encourage international partners to support national efforts.

While the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau through credible elections remains the key priority for the country, it is also essential that the international community support efforts aimed at combating impunity during the transition period and in the medium and longer terms if stability is to be sustainable. UNIOGBIS and its leadership are committed to assisting Guinea-Bissau both in those efforts and in the long-term reconciliation process.

In support of national efforts to address the key drivers of instability, the United Nations system has initiated a review of its work in the country with the aim of realigning its interventions in the areas of State-building and peacebuilding. That exercise will be informed by the final recommendations of the joint AU-CPLP-ECOWAS-EU-United Nations assessment mission, especially with respect to the implementation of security sector reform, the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime, and addressing impunity, human rights violations and the deteriorating socioeconomic situation.

The joint assessment mission has facilitated the way for Guinea-Bissau's regional and international partners to enhance mutual cooperation and to work together in support of the country's stability. It is our hope that that momentum will yield positive results as the international community pursues its efforts to contribute to the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau, the promotion of inclusive dialogue and civilian oversight of the security and defence institutions, as well as the functioning of legitimate State institutions and an end to impunity. Only then can Guinea-Bissau have an opportunity to reverse decades of instability, unconstitutional change of Government, gross human rights abuses and impunity — and hopefully usher in a new era where there will be respect for the rule of law and for human and political rights, as well as opportunities for social and economic development.

The President: I thank Mr. Zerihoun for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mrs. Ribeiro Viotti.

Mrs. Ribeiro Viotti: I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this briefing and for inviting me to

brief the Security Council in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC).

I should like to welcome the Permanent Representative of Mozambique, in his capacity as Chair of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP); the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire, in his capacity as Chair of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); and the Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau, Ambassador João Soares Da Gama.

I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Tayé-Brook Zerihoun for his briefing today. I take this opportunity to convey, through him, our appreciation for the excellent work carried out by the outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Joseph Mutaboba. I wish also to express our satisfaction at the nomination of Mr. José Ramos Horta as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau. His wisdom, experience and political stature are invaluable assets for the work of the United Nations on the ground at this critical juncture. We look forward to close cooperation with Mr. José Ramos Horta.

Almost 10 months on from the coup d'état of 12 April, Guinea-Bissau continues to face significant challenges, which need to be addressed in 2013. Although it is the primary responsibility of Guinea-Bissau's political leaders and people to demonstrate the will to overcome the current situation and to move towards a rapid and sustainable return to constitutional order, the country will continue to need the assistance of the United Nations, including the Peacebuilding Commission, in close coordination with Guinea-Bissau's international partners, to further those goals. Holding free, fair and transparent presidential and legislative elections in a timely manner and promoting the necessary reforms to sustain stability and spur development are urgent tasks that will require international support.

National ownership and mutual accountability are key principles for any country's engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission. Unfortunately, the 12 April coup d'état in Bissau has affected the work that the PBC was carrying out. The progress that had been made on several fronts was interrupted. The absence of consensual national counterparts with whom the configuration could interact on a regular basis has limited the Commission's work.

Those difficulties notwithstanding, the Guinea-Bissau configuration continues to follow closely the situation in the country. I have striven to facilitate dialogue among the main international partners, in particular ECOWAS and the CPLP, to enable concerted action in addressing the challenges in Guinea-Bissau. At the request of the Permanent Mission of Guinea-Bissau, a meeting of the configuration took place on the margins of the General Assembly on 27 September 2012, during which Interim President Raimundo Pereira and Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior briefed the configuration on developments in Guinea-Bissau.

A further meeting of the configuration is being planned for the second half of February in order to receive briefings on the African Union-CPLP-ECOWAS-European Union-United Nations joint assessment mission to Bissau in December 2012.

The continued lack of civilian control over the military, drug trafficking, impunity, economic deterioration and human rights violations are daunting challenges that Guinea-Bissau currently faces. In the past few weeks, steps have been taken by the political parties to revise the political transition pact and the political agreement signed last May, and draft a new transitional regime pact that would serve as the new framework for the return to constitutional order. Those are developments that may signal movement in a positive direction.

The African Union-CPLP-ECOWAS-European Union-United Nations joint assessment mission to Bissau last December was a welcome initiative. Those five partners also met on 26 January in Addis Ababa on the margins of the African Union Summit to discuss the situation in Guinea-Bissau and the way forward. We hope that such meetings will enable Guinea-Bissau's main international partners to get together on a common platform in order to help Guinea-Bissau move swiftly towards the restoration of constitutional order.

We sincerely hope that the recent dialogue among national stakeholders will lead to a more inclusive transitional arrangement. As it has been said before, that arrangement should be inclusive and acceptable to all parties concerned in order to lead the country back to constitutional order, thus enabling the re-engagement of international partners with Guinea-Bissau.

Finally, the appointment of Mr. José Ramos-Horta as Special Representative of the Secretary-General augurs well and brings new impetus to our common efforts to

help Guinea-Bissau overcome the current crisis. I had the chance to exchange views with Mr. Ramos-Horta on the situation in Guinea-Bissau a few weeks ago. The configuration looks forward to productive cooperation and close interaction with him in the weeks and months to come.

Finding a path out of the crisis in Guinea-Bissau requires that all national stakeholders solve their disputes through dialogue. National reconciliation has to take root domestically. Only then can the international community fully and effectively re-engage, confident that it is supporting a nationally owned and inclusive process. The United Nations, the PBC and the wider international community can only play a supporting role. The lead must come from legitimate authorities that represent the people of Guinea-Bissau as a whole.

But even then, huge challenges will remain and the road to sustainable peace and development will be arduous. The Guinea-Bissau configuration remains committed to help the country on that path, with a view to achieving political stability, consolidating peace and furthering its social and economic development.

The President: I thank Mrs. Ribeiro Viotti for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Côte D'Ivoire.

Mr. Bamba (Côte D'Ivoire) (spoke in French): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the 15 States members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

We would like to extend our congratulations to you, Mr. President, on the Republic of Korea's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month.

ECOWAS welcomes the excellent report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/26) on the situation in Guinea-Bissau.

There have been numerous developments in the situation in Guinea-Bissau since the adoption of resolution 2048 (2012). On 21 October 2012 there was a major incident at the Bissalanca air force base in Bissau, which appeared to be a forcible coup. The Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS firmly condemned that attempt to destabilize the Transitional Government.

On 7 November 2012, we attended the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Guinea-Bissau

and ECOWAS with a view to implementing the reform of the defence and security sectors. Furthermore, we would note that on 29 November 2012, the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau reached its full strength of 677 personnel, comprising troops, police and civilians.

At the economic level, in 2012 the falling price of cashew nuts, Guinea-Bissau's main export, caused a drop in the economic growth rate to less than 1 per cent, contrary to the initial forecast of 4.5 per cent. Given the resulting budget deficit, the Transitional Government therefore received various budget assistance, in particular \$5.5 million from the West African Economic and Monetary Union, \$10.6 million from the Federal Republic of Nigeria and \$2 million from the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

I would now like to recall the historic meeting between the President of the Transitional Government, Serifo Nhamadjo, and the former President of Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Raimundo Pereira, both representing Guinea-Bissau parties at the highest level, which took place here in New York and inspired great hope. That meeting, it should be recalled, was convened at the initiative of the African Union, in close cooperation with ECOWAS and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), on Saturday, 29 September 2012 at the headquarters of the African Union Mission in New York.

At the end of that critical meeting the two parties approved an initiative to send a joint mission to Guinea-Bissau, comprising officials of the African Union, ECOWAS, the CPLP, the United Nations and the European Union. The Peace and Security Council of the African Union supported that initiative at its meeting of 2 November 2012, as did ECOWAS at its extraordinary session in Abuja on 11 November 2012. In that context, the joint mission visited Guinea-Bissau from 16 to 21 November 2012.

Specifically, the mission had the following objectives: first, to assess the political and security situation on the ground; secondly, to examine the underlying causes of the recurring crises in Guinea-Bissau; thirdly, to study the possibilities for a consensus among the partner organizations on Guinea-Bissau on the way forward; fourthly, to facilitate the establishment of a series of recommendations on the best ways and means for the organizations concerned to work together in order to assist Guinea-Bissau in overcoming the challenges facing it in the short, medium and long

term; and fifthly, to make recommendations on the establishment of an appropriate follow-up mechanism.

As the Assistant Secretary-General said, in Guinea-Bissau, the mission met the authorities, in particular the interim President, the Prime Minister and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Defence, the Interior and Justice, as well as other officials of the Transitional Government. The mission also met the Bureau of the People's National Assembly and the Parliamentary Commission, tasked with amending the transitional pact and the political agreement recently concluded by ECOWAS.

The joint mission then met with the Office of the National Electoral Commission. It met with the various political parties, both those supporting the current transition and those not participating in it, members of civil society, including women's groups, traditional and religious leaders, socio-professional bodies, businessmen, lawyers and journalists. Finally, the joint mission met members of the Guinea-Bissau diplomatic community.

As the Assistant Secretary-General said, the report of the joint mission has not yet been endorsed by the appropriate bodies. However, now we have some information that I would like to share with the Council. First, a direct dialogue among the parties, including the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), has been established with a view to concluding a transitional pact. That means that the political process is acceptable to all parties and is therefore irreversible. The Parliamentary Commission, under the chairmanship of the PAIGC, has been established to review the transitional road map and, in particular, to propose new realistic dates for the holding of general elections.

ECOWAS welcomes the appointment of Mr. José Ramos-Hortas, former Head of State of Timor-Leste and Nobel Peace Prize laureate. That appointment is very timely given the important coordinating role that the United Nations must play in the concerted pursuit of solutions to the crisis. I would like to take this opportunity to pay the greatest tribute to him and his predecessor, Mr. Joseph Mutaboba, whom we commend.

ECOWAS looks forward to the new Special Representative, who is due to assume his duties in February, coordinating and invigorating the new momentum of the international community's concerted

action, established by the joint mission. We therefore welcome the recommendation of the Secretary-General in paragraph 53 of his report (S/2013/26), which provides for the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) to be extended for three months, until 31 May. ECOWAS hopes that the new Special Representative will be able to visit West Africa and Guinea-Bissau in order to make all necessary contacts in the subregion and to collect the views of the main stakeholders.

On the basis of the conclusions of that trip to the subregion, of course, the Special Representative may propose an adjustment of the United Nations mandate in Guinea-Bissau to the Secretary-General. That new mandate, we believe, should encourage the option of establishing a common strategy of the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union, ECOWAS and the CPLP in order to resolve the crisis in Guinea-Bissau. In that regard, I would like to underscore that the new Special Representative has already begun to make contact with people at all levels so as to successfully discharge his duties. Such steps are of course supported and agreed to by ECOWAS.

ECOWAS maintains that it is high time to work together to strengthen coordination among all stakeholders and to climb down from extreme positions, which to date have not allowed the international community to speak with one voice on the situation in Guinea-Bissau. In that regard, ECOWAS is of the view that it would be in the interests of peace for the Transitional Government in Guinea-Bissau to be recognized and for development partners to be able to resume their cooperation with that country.

I would like to conclude by affirming loud and clear that West Africa greatly needs peace and stability in order to develop the subregion's economic potential. That can happen only if the situation in Guinea-Bissau is resolved once and for all in a sustainable way, all the more since the subregion is suffering from the situation in Mali, which threatens not only West Africa but also international peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Mozambique.

Mr. Gumende (Mozambique): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. I also thank you for the opportunity given to Mozambique to deliver a statement before

this important organ in its capacity as Chair of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) and as my own country at this briefing on the situation in Guinea-Bissau.

The Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries welcomes the report of the Secretary-General, which covers the latest developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S/2013/26). In that regard, we greatly appreciate the efforts of the United Nations and the wider international community to secure a sustainable and durable solution to the crises that the country has long faced. We recognize and encourage the role of the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau in that process.

We remain particularly concerned about the internal situation in Guinea-Bissau since the coup d'état of 12 April 2012, which interrupted the country's path towards the consolidation of peace, democracy and stability. Bearing that in mind, the Community of Portuguese-speaking countries has placed the search for a credible, inclusive and durable solution to the crisis in Guinea-Bissau high on its agenda. The situation in Guinea-Bissau represents a major issue in the cooperation between the CPLP and the United Nations.

The full implementation of resolution 2048 (2012) will be decisive in promoting the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau. We advocate for the implementation of the resolution, as it provides the legal framework for international partners of Guinea-Bissau — in particular the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the CPLP and European Union — to strengthen cooperation towards a consensual, inclusive and nationally owned transition process.

It is in that context that we commend the work done by the joint assessment mission under the auspices of the African Union, which brought together ECOWAS, the European Union, the United Nations and the CPLP and was conducted in December 2012. We look forward to the validation of the recommendations contained in the report of the joint assessment mission as guiding principles that will inform the positive role of the international community in assisting the people of Guinea-Bissau as they chart a new course to take their country out of its deplorable current situation.

We also support the development of a comprehensive and integrated strategy to deal with the critical and immediate challenges facing Guinea-Bissau, namely, by implementing defence and security sector reform and political and economic reforms, combating drug trafficking and fighting impunity. We believe that the right and the main responsibility to overcome its challenges and achieve sustainable solutions lie with the people of Guinea-Bissau themselves. The international community can only play a complementary role in assisting the people of Guinea-Bissau in that effort, to which the CPLP will continue to contribute constructively.

In that regard, we welcome the recent parliamentary agreement between the two main parties, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde and the Party for Social Renewal, aimed at setting up a truly inclusive and consensus-based transition. That is a welcome and important preliminary step towards the establishment of an inclusive framework that will be crucial for the preparation for elections and a return to constitutional order. We commend the people of that sister country for their endeavours to consolidate the foundations for internal dialogue, notwithstanding the prevailing situation in Guinea-Bissau. We hope that the dialogue will pave the way for national reconciliation, which is so essential to attaining long-lasting peace, stability and development.

We take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. José Ramos Horta, former President of Timor-Leste, on his appointment to the post of Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, and we assure him of our full support. We are confident that he will contribute to creating positive momentum among both internal and international stakeholders, thus fulfilling the role that the United Nations wants to play in that country.

We also support the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau for a period of three months and are confident that President Ramos Horta will provide the Secretary-General with a thorough assessment of the situation, leading to a new mandate for the Office in May.

In conclusion, I reaffirm the full commitment of the CPLP member States to work closely with all the relevant partners and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau to find a sustainable solution for the crisis in that country.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.



Security Council

Sixty-eighth year

Provisional

6916th meeting

Thursday, 7 February 2013, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kim Sook (Republic of Korea)

Members:	Argentina	Mr. Rutilo
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Briens
	Guatemala	Mr. Briz Gutiérrez
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	Togo	Mr. M'Beou
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

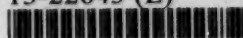
Agenda

Security Council mission

Briefing by the Security Council mission to Yemen (27 January 2013)

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13-22643 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council mission

Briefing by Security Council mission to Yemen (27 January 2013)

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I should like to welcome the return of the members of the Council and the Secretariat who took part in the Security Council mission to Yemen.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by the co-leads of the Security Council mission to Yemen: His Excellency Sir Mark Lyall Grant and His Excellency Mr. Mohammed Loulichki.

I now give the floor to Sir Mark Lyall Grant.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): As this is the first time that I am addressing the Security Council in the Chamber under your presidency, Sir, perhaps I could take this opportunity to congratulate you and the Republic of Korea on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February and also to thank very much Ambassador Masood Khan and the delegation of Pakistan for their stewardship of the Council in the month of January.

Mr. President, as you will be aware, the Security Council's visit to Yemen on 27 January achieved its objectives, which were to evaluate the implementation of resolution 2051 (2012) and to assess the progress made on the political transition. As co-lead with my Moroccan colleague, I would like to brief colleagues on our meetings with the President, the Military Committee and the United Nations country team. I will then invite Ambassador Loulichki to speak on the meetings with the Prime Minister, the national dialogue preparatory committee and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary-General.

But first, I would like to thank the Special Adviser, Mr. Jamal Benomar, and the Resident Coordinator, Mr. Ismail Ould Sheikh Ahmed, as well as their

respective teams, for supporting this mission. I would also like to convey my special appreciation for the excellent work of the Department of Safety and Security, which ensured our security throughout the visit.

President Mansour updated the Security Council on the transition timeline. He reported that phase one, which had involved military restructuring and consolidated gains against Al-Qaida, was now complete. Yemen had been saved from civil war thanks to the GCC initiative and Security Council attention, but deep challenges remained. Phase two would focus on the national dialogue, leading to elections in February 2014. That dialogue would begin imminently.

As the Council is aware, since then President Mansour has announced that the national dialogue would start on 18 March. The President made a direct and clear appeal to the Security Council for continued support and called for strong measures to be taken against those individuals who were undermining the process. A new Yemen, built on the aspirations of the youth who had occupied the squares, was now needed.

For its part, the Security Council mission underlined the need for the transition timeline to remain on track. Important milestones remained, including passing the transitional justice laws, the launch of the national dialogue, and the Yemeni Government agreeing the mutual accountability framework for development pledges.

Similar themes were discussed with the Military Committee. The Military Committee positively assessed the recent decrees to unify command structures and said that the focus would now be on reforming the Ministry of Interior. The Defence Minister argued that the Yemeni military did not use children in armed conflicts and reaffirmed his commitment to cooperating fully with other law-enforcement agencies.

The United Nations country team gave a briefing on the troubling humanitarian situation. Half of Yemen's population of 24 million did not have access to clean water and sanitation; 10 million people did not have sufficient access to food; more than 6 million people lacked access to basic health care; and 1 million children suffered from acute malnutrition.

The 2013 Yemen humanitarian response plan required further financial support. On the economic front, 6 million young people between the ages of 15 and 28 were unemployed. President Mansour called

on the Friends of Yemen, especially ahead of the next meeting, to be held in London on 7 March, to transform the \$8 billion in international pledges into concrete assistance.

As many of us observed during last week's wrap-up meeting (see S/PV.6914), the Yemeni Government continues to welcome Security Council engagement and expects it to continue. I hope that the Council is capable of doing so.

I shall now pass over to Ambassador Loulichki to brief the Council on the remainder of the trip.

The President: I thank Ambassador Sir Mark Lyall Grant for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mohammed Loulichki.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (spoke in Arabic): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council this month and to extend my gratitude to His Excellency Ambassador Masood Khan, who presided over the Council during the month of January. I wish also, like my colleague from the United Kingdom, to congratulate all those who contributed to the success of the Security Council's visit to Yemen, and to express our gratitude to Mr. Jamal Benomar for the efforts he has made on behalf of the Secretary-General. I would ask our colleague from Yemen to transmit my most heartfelt gratitude to the people and the Government of Yemen.

To add on to what was said by my colleague, Sir Mark Lyall Grant, I would like to summarize our meeting with the President of the Government, the Ministers and the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the national dialogue preparatory committee.

During our meeting with the Head of Government and the Ministers, the Security Council expressed its satisfaction at the efforts undertaken by the National Consensus Government, especially with respect to all its achievements at the level of security and the provision of basic services. The Security Council expressed its support for the efforts undertaken by the Government for the success of the transition period in Yemen.

The leader of the Government's statement focused on the transition and the obstacles that the transition is encountering, especially at the political level. He also urged the Security Council not to hesitate to act firmly in order to stand up to anyone who might wish

to undermine the political process aimed at launching the national dialogue. The leader of the Government reaffirmed that the national dialogue would cover every issue of importance to the country and would help to rebuild national unity on a new foundation. The interactive dialogue between the Security Council and the Yemeni Government considered the following issues: the continuing delay in the national reconciliation process and an accounting of the financial pledges made to Yemen.

With regard to the meeting between the Security Council, the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Group of Friends of Yemen, the Council's mission commended the GCC on the role it has played in ensuring the success of the transition period in Yemen, as well as of the executive mechanism set up for that purpose. The Security Council also commended the GCC's political and financial support for Yemen and urged it to continue its efforts. The Secretary-General of the GCC also expressed his satisfaction with the Council's visit to Yemen. He considered the messages we are sending to Yemen and to its donors and investors to be very clear. Also addressed were the issues of granting immunity to the outgoing President; the management of pledges; the risk of failure should there be further delays in adopting the constitution, and the question of the South of the country and the GCC's refusal to cooperate with requests concerning the South.

The third meeting was with the preparatory committee for the national dialogue. The Security Council mission commended the committee's achievements and the reports submitted for the President's consideration. It also encouraged all Yemenis working to implement the transition process and who have devoted themselves to helping the national dialogue succeed through confidence-building measures and transparency, which will enable the country to move on to the next phase, the referendum on the constitution and the organization of elections, both parliamentary and presidential.

At its meeting with the preparatory committee, the mission heard an address by the Chair of the committee, as well as statements by various representatives of Yemeni society within the committee. All recognized the importance of the Security Council's mission to Yemen and expressed the wish that the Council continue to support the transition phase under way in Yemen.

By way of a conclusion, I would like to express our satisfaction with the success of this mission, which has enabled the Council to examine up close the progress made in Yemen as well as the obstacles that must be overcome in order to achieve security and stability there. It is now incumbent on the Council to monitor the situation and the implementation of the next phases of the GCC initiative.

The President: On behalf of the Council, I would like to express our appreciation to all the members of the

Security Council and the Secretariat who participated in the mission for the manner in which they discharged their important responsibilities on the Council's behalf.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 3.25 p.m.



Security Council

Sixty-eighth year

Provisional

6917th meeting

Tuesday, 12 February 2013, 10 a.m.

New York

President: Mr. Kim Sung-hwan/Mr. Kim Sook (Republic of Korea)

Members:

Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
Australia	Mr. Quinlan
Azerbaijan	Mr. Mammadyarov
China	Mr. Wang Min
France	Mr. Araud
Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
Rwanda	Ms. Mushikiwabo
Togo	Mr. Menan
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

Letter dated 4 February 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2013/75)

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13-22967 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

Letter dated 4 February 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2013/75)

The President: I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, the ministers and other representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. Their participation is an affirmation of the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Armenia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Portugal, Qatar, Senegal, Spain, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Republic of Tanzania, Turkey, Uruguay and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Navanethem Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Philip Spoerri, Director for International Law and Cooperation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Ioannis Vrailas, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2013/75, which contains a letter dated 4 February 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I sincerely hope that today's open debate will contribute to sharing the urgent sense among the United Nations membership that the situations endured by civilians in many of today's conflicts require renewed attention. At the same time, we hope that such attention can translate the progress that has been made in the normative framework of international humanitarian law into concrete action. It is my firm belief that today's debate will be a valuable and timely opportunity to renew our joint resolve on the issue.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: Before I turn to the subject of this meeting, let me say a few words about the appalling underground nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

I strongly condemn Pyongyang's reckless act, which shows outright disregard for the repeated call of the international community that it refrain from further provocative measures. The test is a clear and grave violation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Together with the rest of the international community, I have repeatedly called on the new leadership in Pyongyang to give up its pursuit of nuclear weapons, to address international concerns through dialogue, and to start building confidence with neighbouring countries, particularly the Republic of Korea, and the international community. I have also appealed to Pyongyang to focus its energies on ensuring a better future for the country's people by addressing the dire humanitarian and human rights situation. Regrettably, my appeals have fallen on deaf ears.

I am profoundly concerned about the negative impact of this act on regional stability. It is deplorable that Pyongyang has chosen the path of defiance. This third nuclear test by Pyongyang is a serious challenge to global efforts to curb nuclear proliferation. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the only

country that has carried out nuclear tests in the twenty-first century. The authorities in Pyongyang should not be under any illusion that nuclear weapons will enhance their security. To the contrary, as Pyongyang pursues nuclear weapons, it will suffer only greater insecurity and isolation.

I am encouraged by the swift and overwhelming international condemnation of this wanton act. This is a direct challenge to the Security Council. It is absolutely essential that the Council act and speak with one voice and engage with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in a unified manner. I welcome the press statement just issued by the members of the Council in that regard. I will remain in close contact with all concerned parties, and I stand ready to support their efforts.

I thank the Republic of Korea for convening today's debate and His Excellency Mr. Kim Sung-hwan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, for coming to participate in this very important meeting.

Since the Security Council last addressed this issue (see S/PV.6790), civilians have remained subject to unacceptable threats to life and dignity in conflict zones worldwide. Warring parties have continued to violate human rights and international humanitarian law with impunity. And the efforts of United Nations and other humanitarian actors to provide assistance and protection have been hampered by violence. Every day, civilians are killed or maimed in targeted or indiscriminate attacks. Women, girls, men and boys are raped in front of their families. Children and youths are abducted, held in sexual slavery or compelled to take up arms and inflict abuses on their own communities — scarring them for life. Families are forced from their homes into a state of desperation and dependency from which they may never escape.

In Syria, every day provides a searing reminder of the human cost of war. Four million people are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. More than 2 million people have fled their homes. Many lack even the most basic services. Sexual violence is a constant threat. The volatility of the security situation, logistical challenges and bureaucratic constraints are hampering the response effort. The international community needs access to all areas so we can reach more people in need.

The situation in Syria is particularly acute and intractable, but in Afghanistan, the Central African

Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan and elsewhere, civilians continue to suffer and die as parties to conflict ignore their obligations to protect.

But, let us remember that the obligation does not rest solely with warring parties. We all have a responsibility to protect. Failure to protect civilians in armed conflict can contribute directly to the commission of atrocity crimes. Violence against civilians is also unquestionably abetted by the free flow of weapons. This underlines the importance of next month's arms trade treaty negotiations. We urgently need a robust and comprehensive agreement that addresses the humanitarian impact of the poorly regulated trade in arms.

My internal review panel on United Nations action in Sri Lanka raised important issues concerning how the United Nations and Member States could strengthen the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The recommendations are undergoing internal review, and I will report on them later this year.

In previous reports to the Council, I have welcomed the informal experts group on the protection of civilians as an important forum for keeping the Council informed of protection developments on the ground. I encourage this practice to continue and the Council to explore ways to make greater use of the Group. My reports have also recommended steps for enhancing the protection of civilians that I would like to emphasize again.

First, all parties to conflict should avoid using explosive weapons with wide-area effect in populated areas. This includes roadside bombs, heavy weapons and artillery, and air strikes. I urge the Council to recognize and act on this fundamental humanitarian issue. My next report will provide concrete recommendations for consideration.

Secondly, the Council must emphasize that States bear the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians. Where there are peacekeeping missions, the United Nations will do its utmost to support States to fulfil their obligations, in line with our Human Rights Due Diligence Policy. I urge the Council to take a strong and visible lead in protecting civilians and pursuing accountability for violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. In this regard, I welcome the debate triggered by the call of some Member States for the Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

Thirdly, States should recognize the need for consistent engagement by humanitarian actors with all relevant State and non-State actors. This is essential to ensuring improved compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law, as well as safe access to populations in need.

Fourthly, all relevant authorities should expedite administrative, visa, travel and customs procedures to facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of relief consignments, equipment and personnel to people in need of protection and assistance. We need accountability for grave denials of access and for attacks against humanitarian workers.

Fifthly, I urge the Council to make greater use of commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions mandated by the United Nations to investigate and verify alleged violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. It is important for accountability, justice and protection to support timely follow-up on their findings.

Finally, the Council must ensure that peacekeeping operations mandated with protecting civilians have adequate resources. It is particularly important that they be equipped to respond to conflict-related sexual violence. States that contribute military and police personnel to missions should be supported to ensure that they are trained to be proactive in addressing the unique vulnerability of women and children. That includes partnering with human rights and other civilian components to prevent and respond to human rights and humanitarian law violations.

Next month, the Commission on the Status of Women will address conflict-related sexual violence as part of its theme of "Ending violence against women". I count on Member States to use the meeting to make practical commitments to ending sexual and gender-based violence in all its forms.

Today's debate is an important opportunity for the Council and Member States to reflect on the impact of armed conflict on civilians and on the actions that need to be taken to increase compliance with international law and fulfil the Council's commitment to protection. The Council's continued and consistent discussion of this issue is essential. I urge Council members to bring all their considerable powers to bear on reducing the unacceptable toll that conflict is taking on civilians every day.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to Ms. Pillay.

Ms. Pillay: Let me follow the words of the Secretary-General by beginning with Syria. At my latest briefing to the Security Council, 60,000 people had already been killed. That figure is probably now approaching 70,000. The Security Council is at its best when it acts with a unified voice. The lack of consensus on Syria, and the resulting inaction, has been disastrous. Civilians on all sides have paid the price. We will be judged against the tragedy that has unfolded before our eyes. The Council, as well as those of us in key positions within the United Nations, will be rightly asked what we did.

One immediate action that the Council could take is clear, namely, refer Syria to the International Criminal Court. That would send a clear message to both the Government and the opposition that there will be consequences for their actions. It could also have a very significant preventive effect.

In contrast, the Council has achieved political consensus regarding the situation in Mali. I welcome the Council's provision for United Nations human rights monitoring there. The protection of human rights is key to stabilizing the situation. My Office is deploying human rights officers in the country, with the first having arrived in Bamako at the end of last week.

As the situation evolves, attacks and reprisals risk driving Mali into a catastrophic spiral of violence. I call on all parties to the conflict to abide by international human rights and humanitarian law and to prevent retaliation.

The Council is increasingly making use of human rights components in peacekeeping and special political missions, often in response to concerns for the protection of civilians from human rights abuses. Human rights components provide fundamental support to the overall mandate of peace missions through strong, impartial and independent human rights monitoring and reporting. Through that, they bring critical information to the Council and support local authorities in directly addressing human rights concerns.

In Afghanistan, the Council's decision to provide a strong human rights mandate to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) allows the international community to have an authoritative

account of the protection-of-civilians challenges and the responsibility of all parties for protecting them. Currently, according to UNAMA, insurgents' indiscriminate use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) account for 53 per cent of all civilians killed or wounded. I call again on all anti-Government groups in Afghanistan to cease targeting civilians and stop the use of IEDs and other illegal tactics.

In the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the human rights component of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has reported to the Council on recent large-scale and serious violations. To end that cycle of violence, I encourage the Council to include an accountability element in its interaction with all parties in that country and in neighbouring countries.

Given the ongoing conflict in Somalia and recent events in the Central African Republic, independent and stronger human rights monitoring is essential also in those countries. Human rights information will allow the Council to measure progress against its mandated objectives in those countries.

I also urge the Council to provide for a stronger human rights monitoring capacity in the peacekeeping mission in Abyei. That would help the mission and the international community to respond proactively to the fragile situation in the border area.

The recent expulsion of a human rights officer by the South Sudanese Government, without any valid justification, sets a dangerous precedent that does not facilitate the mission's efforts to protect civilians. I join Special Representative Johnson in asking the Government to reconsider its decision.

I wish to thank the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General for their leadership in launching a follow-up process to the Petrie report, which reviewed United Nations action in Sri Lanka. The report highlights systemic failings that extend across responses to many situations and indicates that important recommendations of the 1999 United Nations independent inquiry on Rwanda have not been implemented. It is time for us to find a way to do better. In that context, my Office looks forward to working towards addressing this issue. Let me highlight four areas where there is need for improvement.

First, early and credible information on human rights and international humanitarian law violations

can make it easier for the Council and the wider United Nations system to reach consensus and make informed decisions. While information technology facilitates early warning, it cannot replace impartial, reliable and timely expert monitoring and reporting on respect for international law. Far too often, before monitoring and reporting on human rights violations, the United Nations waits many months until we deploy staff on the ground. Sometimes access is denied expressly to prevent reporting. United Nations protection of civilians cannot be held hostage to delayed deployments or a lack of access. We must have the capacity and structures to monitor from Headquarters, when needed, and to provide Member States and policy makers with the best available information.

Secondly, the United Nations can strengthen its sense of common purpose and management. The Petrie report points to the problematic tendency of United Nations entities to compartmentalize our approach to a situation rather than providing Member States with a holistic analysis. Compartmentalization not only leads to duplication, but can also side-line human rights concerns.

Thirdly, the United Nations should offer a wider range of tools for intervention on the ground. Small and discrete models of field operations with short lifespans can be deployed quickly at limited cost and in close consultation with the regional States and national authorities. Such deployments provide a non-intrusive means of United Nations action that may be attractive where States wish to support an early United Nations response to serious concerns with regard to the protection of civilians, so long as it is light and limited. The use of large peacekeeping operations can be deployed later where needed.

Fourthly, both the Rwanda and the Petrie reports are clear in stating that the single most important element for United Nations protection of civilians is early political consensus among Member States acting through the United Nations. I hope that we in the Secretariat can better support Member States in their efforts to reach early consensus.

Effectiveness, integrity, courage and accountability are what the people we are trying to protect expect from us. That is what should guide our interactions when dealing with the killing of many people. There will always be some disagreement within the international community as to how to respond to a given situation, but when tens of thousands of civilian lives are threatened,

as is currently the case in the Syrian Arab Republic, the world expects the Security Council to unite and act.

The President: I thank Ms. Pillay for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Spoerri.

Mr. Spoerri: On behalf of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), I am pleased and honoured to once again brief the Security Council, and I thank the Republic of Korea for the invitation.

Since I last addressed members of this Council eight months ago (see S/PV.6790), a number of armed conflicts have seen a resurgence or have intensified, and others have continued to rumble on, as they have for many years. All of them, regardless of their causes or where they are in the world — be it in the Syrian Arab Republic or Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo or Afghanistan — have at least one thing in common. In all of them, the grim reality is that civilian men, women and children continue to suffer the overwhelming burden of the fallout, while efforts to protect those civilians are fraught with difficulties.

During the debate held in June 2012, I focused on three issues of fundamental concern to the ICRC. The continuing urgency of those issues justifies my returning to them today. They are, first, threats affecting access to health care for the wounded and sick in armed conflicts and other emergencies; secondly, the availability and use of arms; and thirdly, the overarching lack of compliance with international humanitarian law on the part of States and non-State armed groups, which lies at the heart of the massive suffering to which we are witness.

On the issue of violence against health care personnel and facilities, I will start with some modest but encouraging good news. Following the adoption of a far-reaching resolution on health care in dangerous situations at the thirty-first International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in Geneva in December 2011, the ICRC began a series of consultations with States and other major stakeholders on making the delivery of health care safer in dangerous situations worldwide. Some concrete steps have already been taken. A series of experts' workshops, which began in 2012 and will continue into 2014, has mobilized health authorities, medical associations, national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and non-governmental organizations from around the world. They have helped to raise awareness and understanding of the

issue and have put forward practical recommendations for safe practices. States have in some cases, of their own volition, undertaken diplomatic initiatives aimed at facilitating the delivery of health care in conflict-affected countries. In others — Colombia and Yemen, for example — they have taken specific steps towards ensuring respect for health care structures and personnel in their own countries.

Sadly, the good news cannot detract from the bad. ICRC health care data for 2012 shows that the vast majority of violent incidents, or over 80 per cent of the almost 900 incidents recorded in 22 countries, affect local health care workers. Of those health workers caught up in such incidents, around 25 per cent were killed or wounded. In some cases, secondary explosions targeted those trying to assist the victims of an initial explosion, a particularly repugnant practice causing further injury and death and preventing care from reaching those who urgently need it. A further trend with sometimes catastrophic consequences is the large-scale flight of health workers in the face of attacks, threats or general insecurity.

Thus, while there may be some steps in the right direction, much more needs to be done. As States bear the primary responsibility for improving the situation, the ICRC once again urges members of the Council to initiate or actively support efforts to tackle this pressing humanitarian concern and to influence others to do the same. Indeed, that is required under the obligation to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law in accordance with common article 1 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

That brings me to the second major concern, which is closely linked with the first, and that is the massive circulation and widespread availability of arms and ammunition. In many contexts, that may put civilians at a risk of being wounded or killed after an armed conflict has ended equal to the risk during the conflict. The poorly regulated international trade in conventional arms, including the inadequate standards for their transfer, is at least partly to blame.

A strong and effective arms trade treaty is urgently needed to enhance the protection of civilians as well as health-care and humanitarian workers working to assist those who are most vulnerable and to help ensure that international humanitarian law is respected by all parties to armed conflicts, be they international or non-international in nature.

The next diplomatic conference, to be held in just a few weeks' time, will be a golden opportunity, which we urge States to seize decisively in order to redouble their efforts to ensure the adoption of a robust arms trade treaty, one that sets strict criteria for all transfers of all conventional arms. The ICRC remains committed to helping to achieve that goal, working with States, national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the United Nations and other organizations.

The third major concern — namely, the prevailing lack of respect for international humanitarian law by both States and non-State armed groups, coupled with a dominant culture of impunity — is the main common denominator of all other protection concerns. Some progress has undoubtedly been made at both the national and the international levels to improve compliance and accountability. That ranges from the implementation of domestic legislation to the training of security forces and the judicial processes of the international criminal tribunals. In addition, in 2011, the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent endorsed the ICRC proposal to further work aimed at strengthening legal protection for people affected by armed conflict. The joint Swiss-ICRC initiative to strengthen compliance with international humanitarian law has gained momentum, with an increasing number of States engaging in substantive discussions on that issue.

The ICRC works at all levels — diplomatic, policy and operational — towards ensuring better respect for international humanitarian law. To be credible and effective, that requires a rigorously impartial, neutral and independent approach, one that remains consistently distinct from any kind of political or judicial process. That in turn helps to facilitate dialogue with parties on all sides to a conflict and humanitarian access to people in need. Protection lies at the heart of the ICRC mandate and mission and provides a framework for our assistance activities.

Of course, there are numerous challenges and constraints that make that task all the more difficult. The humanitarian environment is an increasingly complex one. Just one aspect of that is the sometimes baffling array of new actors, both those involved in armed conflict and those responding to its humanitarian consequences, with at times a blurred line between the two. Increasing numbers of civilian and military actors are working for the protection of civilians with very different mandates, objectives and approaches. At the

same time, the limitations on access to people in need of protection that have been imposed by States and non-State actors are a severe constraint in numerous situations of armed conflict.

The challenge here is to clearly distinguish and separate principled humanitarian action from pure relief assistance. Whereas the latter may have military, political or economic objectives underpinning it, the former must always be based purely on actual needs. Blurring the lines between the two ultimately complicates or hinders impartial humanitarian access to people on both sides of a conflict for all actors. To that end, the principles of humanity and impartiality must be the essential guide for all humanitarian actors, regardless of their particular mandate or approach.

As the ICRC marks its 150th anniversary this week, it is a fitting moment to reflect on not only the profound changes in the humanitarian environment over the years and the necessity to adapt to those changes, but also on what has remained constant. Henri Dunant's vision of humane treatment for wounded and captured soldiers on all sides — which has extended to one of providing protection and assistance to all people affected by armed conflict, on the basis of humanitarian need alone — must surely remain the bedrock of humanitarian action, as much today, as was the case 150 years ago. The desire and ambition to uphold human dignity, even in the midst of armed conflict, must surely continue to be our common goal. Respect for the laws of war also provides the foundation on which people can rebuild and recover after conflict has ended.

Tackling the problems ranging from combatting violence to health care workers, ensuring the adoption of a strong arms trade treaty to taking concrete measures to improve compliance with international humanitarian law would already represent great strides towards achieving our common goal. I end, therefore, with the ICRC's urgent plea to the members of the Council to do all they can to address those issues.

The President: I thank Mr. Spoerri for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea.

Before I proceed to the main topic of today's open debate, let me briefly touch upon the nuclear test conducted by North Korea last night. That country's nuclear test constitutes a flagrant violation of resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009) and 2087 (2013).

It poses a direct challenge to the whole international community, as well as an unacceptable threat to the peace and security of the Korean peninsula and North-East Asia.

Just an hour ago, the members of the Security Council strongly condemned North Korea's nuclear test with one voice and decided to begin working immediately on adopting a Security Council resolution to take necessary measures. The Government of the Republic of Korea, as President of the Security Council for the month of February, will cooperate closely with the international community.

I would now like to deliver my statement on the main topic of the open debate today.

It is a great honour for me to be here today and preside over this open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Director for International Law and Cooperation of the International Committee of the Red Cross for joining us today. I also welcome the presence of Ms. Louise Mushikiwabo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Rwanda; Mr. Elmar Maharram oglu Mammadyarov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan; and Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Minister for External Relations of Brazil.

Despite significant normative progress in the protection of civilians in armed conflict, civilians are still suffering the direct effects of armed conflicts on the ground. They have been killed, injured, kidnapped and forced to leave their homes. It is deeply regrettable that civilians continue to represent the majority of the victims of conflict in many parts of the world today. The widespread violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law trouble us all. The Security Council needs to remain ever vigilant to address that situation.

The deteriorating situation in Syria is of particular concern to us. It is alarming that, according to the recent briefing by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, more than 60,000 Syrian citizens have been killed. While it is hard to know the exact number of non-combatant casualties, it is clear that civilians are bearing the brunt of the continuing violence. They are also subject to humanitarian tragedy.

Against that backdrop, I would like to emphasize the following three points. First, I would like to

underline the need to bolster accountability for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, which I believe is crucial for the protection of civilians. Countering impunity is not only a significant tool in preventing further violations against civilians, but also an essential factor in ensuring an effective reconciliation process.

While national authorities have the primary responsibility to provide accountability, the Security Council should be able to play a more active role where national authorities fail to do so. The Council needs to contribute towards ensuring accountability at the international level, including through the referral of relevant situations to the International Criminal Court.

In order to ensure accountability, it is also important to investigate and document violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in armed conflicts. That is a significant prerequisite for bringing perpetrators of crimes to justice. In that regard, we support the continued efforts of the entire United Nations system, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Human Rights Council, which has established several commissions of inquiry and special procedures.

Secondly, there is an urgent need to ensure timely and unhindered humanitarian access, as well as the safety and security of humanitarian workers. Impediments to humanitarian access in violation of applicable humanitarian law should be condemned and removed immediately. It is of particular concern that violence against humanitarian workers, including their abduction and killing, continues to threaten humanitarian activities in many armed conflict situations.

Resolution 1894 (2009) invited the Secretary-General to continue the systematic monitoring and analysis of constraints on humanitarian access. I am pleased that a detailed analysis of the problem was provided in the Secretary-General's report of last year on the issue (S/2012/376). As the report rightly pointed out, constraints on humanitarian access are varied in nature. States and other parties to conflict need to work closely with humanitarian organizations to identify appropriate, context-specific solutions and strategies to allow humanitarian assistance and reduce the security risks of humanitarian workers.

Thirdly, particular attention needs to be paid to the various forms of violence against women and

children in armed conflict. It is deeply regrettable that sexual violence, including rape, remains a prominent feature of armed conflict, affecting women and girls in many parts of the world. While all civilians need to be protected, we need to remain concerned about the particular vulnerabilities of women and girls. I believe that ending violence against women should be pursued during the entire process of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. I would like to underline once again the significance of ensuring accountability for those responsible for violence against women. In addition, as Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) recognized, we need to enhance women's empowerment, including their participation in peacekeeping operations and post-conflict reconstruction processes.

Before concluding, I would like to pay tribute to the United Nations peacekeepers and humanitarian workers, who are working hard to protect civilians around the world and to ease their hardship.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

Ms. Mushikiwabo (Rwanda): I would like to commend the President of the Council for convening this important debate on the protection of civilians and for the draft presidential statement which will be adopted today. I also thank the Secretary-General for his informative briefing, as well as High Commissioner for Human Rights Pillay and Mr. Spoerri for their valued contributions and briefings this morning.

The protection of civilians is a very personal issue for my country, Rwanda. In 1994, a genocide claimed the lives of nearly 1 million Rwandans. Rwandans wince in sympathy when they see images of civilians under threat elsewhere in the world today.

My country's core message today is that enhancing the protection of civilians in armed conflict requires action before the conflict starts. The proliferation of non-State armed groups makes civilian protection both more urgent and harder to achieve. In particular, I wish to emphasize the importance of increasing investments in the professionalization of military and police forces, especially adequate training in the protection of civilians. Only when the leadership of armed forces shares the international community's preoccupation with civilian protection will we see decisive progress made.

As a result of the experience of Rwanda, we feel a moral obligation to participate as vigorously as possible

in activities, such as United Nations peacekeeping operations, that increase protection for civilians in armed conflict. We also take very seriously all efforts, such as that in which we are engaged today, to strengthen international norms to reduce tolerance for such crimes.

In that regard, I would like to begin my remarks on a note of optimism. Significant progress has indeed been made in the evolution of international norms since the genocide in my country 19 years ago. Normative progress is slow, built year by year and resolution by resolution, almost imperceptibly. It can sometimes seem like we are just repeating ourselves, but the cumulative effect is dramatic. Each year, the consensus grows stronger that the protection of civilians and the prevention of crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity are a fundamental duty of each State, as well as a legitimate and necessary focus of collective action in the international system.

The impetus to rethink international norms comes in large part from the effort to comprehend what happened in conflicts such as the tragedy of Rwanda in 1994. The world's response to crimes has been to withdraw international forces, particularly in my country 19 years ago, and in some cases to refuse outright to provide protection. Yet I believe that the course of action adopted by the international community in 1994 and the concepts used to justify it would not be acceptable today — hence, my optimism. Rwanda would be pleased if the end result of the process of introspection were to be a world that is much more resistant to crimes and mass atrocities. And if we keep working together, I believe that we can get there.

Evidence that progress is possible should encourage us to redouble our efforts, yet we must not neglect the urgent challenges that confront us at this very moment. Civilians are at serious risk today in Syria, the Sudan, South Sudan, Mali and the Democratic Republic of Congo — right in our neighbourhood — and the Council is likely to face new situations of armed conflict in the months and years ahead. My country's experience explains why we are proud to co-chair, together with the Netherlands, the Group of Friends on the Protection of Civilians. Indeed, I would like to take this opportunity to connect our debate on the protection of civilians more concretely to the evolving norm of the responsibility to protect.

Two features of that norm — prevention and the danger of incitement, as set out in paragraph 138 of

the 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1) — have not been emphasized often enough. I believe that the best way to enhance the protection of civilians in armed conflicts is to move from a mindset of conflict management to one of prevention. Moreover, individual States and United Nations peacekeeping missions must become more sensitive to often subtle forms of incitement that lay the groundwork for crimes against humanity, and work to curtail it before it is too late.

I would like to address two further aspects of the core challenges identified by the Secretary-General in his 2009 report (S/2009/277) — first, enhancing the implementation of protection mandates by United Nations peacekeeping missions, and secondly, enhancing accountability for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

On peacekeeping, my country Rwanda welcomes the continued development of strategies to protect civilians and operational baselines through the guidance of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. Rwanda currently contributes to seven United Nations peacekeeping missions. In line with the lessons we learned about rebuilding after the genocide, we do not approach peacekeeping as an exclusively military task. We believe that early peacebuilding is critical to the success of missions, and that adequate resources should be directed to complement uniformed personnel as they fulfil their mandate to protect civilians.

Effective measures need be neither costly nor controversial. For example, within their areas of patrol with the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, Rwandan peacekeepers have introduced an energy-efficient stove that was developed in Rwanda back in the year 2000 to protect the environment. Because the stoves use less firewood, women and children do not have to venture as far to collect wood, thereby reducing the risk of brutal attacks and rape that often accompany their search.

Another example is increasing the number of trained female peacekeepers. Female peacekeepers are often better able to intervene in specific situations concerning women and children, particularly in specific cultural contexts. Rwanda is a leading contributor of female police officers to United Nations peacekeeping missions, and we have seen these officers combat gender-based violence and raise awareness in the communities they serve in ways that have made peacekeepers better able to do so.

Ensuring that all necessary capabilities are deployed in support of peacekeepers is critical to their ability to protect civilian populations. In late 2012, Rwanda contributed military utility helicopters to the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan, extending the Mission's area of influence and contributing to a safer environment for civilians.

We also support calls for peacekeeping missions to work with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to preserve the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps.

On accountability for crimes against civilians, I wish to emphasize four important points. First, justice must be timely. Nearly two decades after the genocide in my country, the international judicial process has yet to conclude. Secondly, rendering justice to victims should be the only objective of accountability mechanisms, keeping political considerations out of the process. Justice should not be and cannot be selective or used for political expediency. Thirdly, more careful attention should be paid to the principle of subsidiarity when choosing the most appropriate venue for judicial proceedings. Justice is best rendered at home. Fourthly, and related to subsidiarity, is that the international community should increase investment in strengthening national judicial capacities, which is the best way to make justice relevant to local communities and sustainable.

I conclude by once again restating Rwanda's firm commitment to enhancing the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and we express gratitude to the women and men protecting those in need, especially on our continent, as well as those who have laid down their lives in the name of international peace and security.

Mr. Mammadyarov (Azerbaijan): First of all, I would like to thank the Republic of Korea and you personally, Mr. Minister, for convening this important open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict and for submitting a concept note on the topic (S/2013/75, annex). We are also grateful to the Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Director for International Law and Cooperation of the International Committee of the Red Cross for their statements.

A response to the large-scale atrocities perpetrated during the Second World War served as the basis for the founding of the United Nations, the proclaiming of fundamental values, such as peace and respect for

human rights, and the establishment of multinational judicial institutions. The significant development of international norms and standards for the protection of civilians and the engagement of the Security Council, including the adoption of a number of important documents and practical steps towards their implementation, have given rise to increased attention to the issue.

However, efforts to ensure a peaceful, just and prosperous world have not always been consistent and successful. As a consequence, civilians continue to suffer from inadequate protection and discriminatory treatment in situations of armed conflict. As the latest report of the Secretary-General on the topic acknowledges:

"Despite some progress, the reality on the ground continues to be characterized by the frequent failure of parties to conflict to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law to respect and protect civilians as well as with relevant human rights obligations." (S/2012/376, para. 4)

Azerbaijan's consistent position with regard to the issue under consideration is well known and stems from its keen interest in contributing to the achievement of sustainable peace and development and from our practical experience in addressing the impact of armed conflict on civilians. The war unleashed by neighbouring Armenia against my country and the military occupation of our territories have had a considerable impact on civilians. As a result of that aggression, Azerbaijan continues to suffer from having one of the highest numbers of refugees and displaced persons in the world. At present, approximately one of every nine persons in the country belongs to that category. Twenty-one years ago, an unprecedented massacre was committed against the Azerbaijani population in the town of Khojaly. In one night, more than 600 civilians were killed in that town only because they were Azerbaijanis. Not even women, children and elderly were spared by the invading Armenian troops and irregular local armed groups.

In all its four resolutions adopted in 1993 in response to the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan (resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993)), the Security Council referred specifically to violations of international humanitarian law, including the displacement of a large number of civilians in Azerbaijan, attacks on civilians and the bombardment of inhabited areas. We are confident that the consistent

measures being taken at the national level, as well as the existing international legal framework, will serve to bring to justice those responsible for the grave offences committed against the civilian population of Azerbaijan during the conflict. It is incontrovertible today that no official or political status cloaks the person concerned with immunity for the most serious international crimes, such as war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and ethnic cleansing.

In recent years, important steps have been taken for the protection and vindication of rights and the prevention and punishment of crimes that have an international dimension and scope. Indeed, ending impunity is essential not only for the purposes of identifying responsibility for both parties to the conflict and individual perpetrators but also for ensuring sustainable peace, truth, reconciliation, the rights and interests of victims and the well-being of society at large.

Unfortunately, not all grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law have received due attention and a response at the international and regional levels. As a result, past wrongs left unpunished and unrecognized continue to impede progress in achieving the long-awaited peace and reconciliation and could even play a key role in the eruption of new conflicts and the commission of new crimes.

More resolute and targeted measures are required to end impunity in such situations. We concur with the Secretary-General that where national authorities fail to take the steps necessary to ensure accountability, the international community and the Council should play a more proactive role in ensuring an appropriate response, including through the establishment of international commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions and in supporting the implementation of their recommendations. It is also essential to emphasize the role of the relevant humanitarian mandates in ensuring that all situations of armed conflict, including those of a protracted nature, receive due attention by the international community.

It is important to repeatedly recall that the establishment of truth in respect to gross violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, the provision of adequate and effective reparations to victims and the need for institutional actions to prevent the repetition of such violations are all necessary adjuncts to true conflict resolution and imperative with

regard to the effective and politically uncompromising system of international criminal justice. In any event, the conflict resolution initiatives considered by the Security Council and regional arrangements must ensure that peace and justice work together effectively. Such an approach provides that no peace settlement can be reached if it is inconsistent with international law, particularly where peremptory norms and the rules and standards of international humanitarian and human rights law are concerned.

It is essential that peace efforts and peace agreements never encourage the acceptance of situations achieved by the unlawful use of force and other egregious violations of international law, such as war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and ethnic cleansing. On the other hand, in situations of protracted armed conflict, the lack of agreement on political issues cannot be used as a pretext for not addressing problems caused by continued and deliberate disrespect for international humanitarian human rights law.

Particular consideration must be given to implications for the protection of civilians in armed conflicts aggravated by population displacements and foreign military occupation. The impact of conflict on housing, land and property, as well as discrimination on ethnic grounds and forced demographic changes in such situations, require a more consistent approach in order to put an end to illegal practices and policies and to ensure the safe and dignified return of displaced populations to their homes.

It is important that the recognition of the right to return, along with increased attention to its practical implementation and concrete measures aimed at overcoming obstacles that prevent return, be applied by the international community with more systematic regularity. As the Secretary-General made clear in an earlier report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict,

"[e]nsuring the right to return constitutes a categorical rejection of the gains of ethnic cleansing ... and offers some measure of justice to those displaced from their homes and land, thereby removing a source of possible future tension and conflict" (S/2007/643, para. 55).

Among the pressing issues requiring urgent action and attention is that of civilians, including women and children, taken hostage and reported missing in connection with armed conflict. Azerbaijan continues

its efforts to address that disturbing phenomenon, including through the relevant biannual resolution of the General Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women, of which my country is a main sponsor.

It is important that the Security Council consistently maintain its focus on the protection of civilians. Azerbaijan would support more systematic and frequent discussions on the topic during briefings and consultations, as well as at informal meetings, such as Arria Formula meetings.

In conclusion, I would like once again to commend the initiative of the Republic of Korea to convene this open debate on the protection of civilians and to advance that significant theme in the work of the Security Council. We welcome the draft presidential statement to be adopted later as the outcome of today's meeting. It contains a number of the aforementioned key components of our position and approach on the topic.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): I thank Foreign Minister Kim Sung-hwan for chairing this important debate. I also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, High Commissioner Pillay and International Committee of the Red Cross Director Spoorri for their statements. Protecting civilians in armed conflict is a fundamental responsibility of the international community and a core function of the Security Council in carrying out its mandate to safeguard international peace and security.

The United States knows that its security is diminished when masses of civilians are slaughtered, refugees flee across borders to escape brutal attacks, and murderers wreak havoc on regional stability and livelihoods.

Regrettably, history has taught us that our pursuit of a world in which States do not systematically slaughter civilians will not arrive without concerted and coordinated action. Nearly a year ago, President Obama announced at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum new actions that the United States is taking to implement his landmark policy directive on atrocity prevention.

Under the President's leadership, my Government has implemented unprecedented steps to enhance our capabilities and structures for preventing heinous crimes against civilians, from strengthening our early warning and preventive diplomacy to punishing perpetrators and pressing for accountability. Our new

Atrocities Prevention Board, a committee of senior officials from across the United States Government, is overseeing this critical work and ensuring that we are focused on emerging situations of concern.

But while national action is necessary, it is not sufficient. International collective action is required, and we look forward to strengthening our cooperation with the United Nations and Member States to that end.

Few are more likely to be the victims of mass atrocities than civilians caught in armed conflict. Time and again, and all too often, the world bears witness to the horror of mass killings, sexual violence and gross human rights abuses of innocents in conflict. Therefore protecting civilians in armed conflict must remain a top priority of the Council and the United Nations as a whole.

Though we must never relent in this effort, we are encouraged that the United Nations has made strides in enhancing United Nations tools to protect civilians. We commend the Secretariat's efforts to help United Nations field missions develop operational guidance and mission-wide strategies to implement their civilian-protection mandates. The recently released United Nations study entitled "Protection of civilians: coordination mechanisms in United Nations peacekeeping missions" highlights several mechanisms for executing protection-of-civilian mandates successfully.

Simple but practical tools, many focused on internal procedures and mission structure, enable mission focal points to integrate mission activities in support of protection mandates. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan, for example, produced an integrated strategy that led to an innovative early-warning system and country support basis that enabled better protection of rural populations.

Mission-wide strategies depend on missions really understanding the threats and violence that civilians face in their area of operation. When peacekeepers know their local environments well, they are better able to protect civilians. Such detailed knowledge requires active and sustained engagement with local populations. We encourage United Nations missions with protection mandates to assess, in their reports and briefings to the Council, the threats and vulnerabilities facing civilians in their area of operation. We also urge mission-wide strategies to anticipate and outline steps to counter any escalation in violence against civilians that could

culminate in mass atrocities. United Nations missions should proactively explain their role in protecting civilians to local communities.

Beyond a sophisticated understanding of their areas of operation, peacekeepers need strong training in civilian protection. The United States invests significantly in peacekeeper training, and we urge all peacekeeping training centres to adopt the United Nations innovative training guidance on the protection of civilians. Such training should be standardized and required for every peacekeeper.

For all that United Nations peacekeepers and field missions can do, let us not forget that national Governments always bear primary responsibility for protecting their own populations. In some countries, Governments are manifestly failing in that responsibility, often because of insufficient capacity or will to address the problem. In some countries, moreover, Governments condone and even perpetrate atrocities against their own people. Through its statements, resolutions and diplomacy, the Council must continue to press Governments to fulfil their obligations.

In that regard, I want to highlight the horrific attacks by the Syrian regime on the Syrian people, including the widely reported targeting of hospitals and health-care centres and the use of ballistic missiles against civilian populations. The carnage unleashed by Al-Assad merits universal indignation and strong action from the Council. When the people of Libya were on the verge of being slaughtered by a brutal dictator, the Council acted, prevented a massacre and saved countless lives. That should remind us that, for civilians in conflict, Security Council action can mean the difference between life and death.

In the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (General Assembly resolution 60/1) and in resolution 1894 (2009), all States Members of the United Nations accepted a shared responsibility to protect populations from genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and war crimes. While we continue to elaborate the application of that principle, when Governments manifestly fail to protect their civilians, the international community must not dither, but, rather, act decisively to assume its responsibility collectively to protect.

Another fundamental but often overlooked principle of protecting civilians is the ensuring of

humanitarian access. No State Member of the United Nations or non-State actor should ever prevent timely, full and unimpeded humanitarian access to populations in need of assistance. Yet the Government of the Sudan has refused, for a year and half now, to permit the safe and unhindered provision of international humanitarian assistance to address the acute humanitarian emergency in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states, particularly the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North-controlled areas, which is largely of Khartoum's making. Since 2011, more than 214,000 refugees have crossed into Ethiopia and South Sudan, and 695,000 have been displaced within the two areas. That is appalling and unacceptable.

In this and other such situations, we commend the service and dedication of the humanitarian workers, who help the world's most vulnerable, at great risk to themselves. Attacks against humanitarian workers are deplorable and should be condemned wherever committed.

We fully support the Secretary-General's call for the Council to be more active in addressing violations of international law and to strengthen accountability. The United States strongly rejects impunity and supports efforts to hold accountable violators of international humanitarian and human rights law. Our long-standing support for international tribunals and efforts to document ongoing atrocities in places such as Syria reflect that commitment.

Recent events, including the conviction of Charles Taylor by the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the International Criminal Court's judgement against Thomas Lubango Dyilo, of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, show us that accountability for those who commit atrocities and justice for their victims is possible.

Yet too many perpetrators remain free. The Council needs the facts and strong reporting to help bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against civilians. President Obama has declared that preventing mass atrocities is a core national security interest and a core moral responsibility of the United States. The protection of civilians is a fundamental element of the Security Council's obligation to ensure international peace and security. It is clear that we must keep our attention focused squarely on the practical steps we can take to enhance the protection of civilians in armed conflict and redouble our efforts to ensure that the Council is

not sitting on the sidelines when civilian populations are in grave danger.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for holding this important debate today and for having come to New York to lend your personal weight to this important issue. Let me also warmly thank the Secretary-General, High Commissioner Pillay and the Director for International Law and Cooperation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Spoerri, for their valuable briefings.

Civilians continue to account for the vast majority of casualties in armed conflict. That suffering must stop. The protection of civilians is a pressing responsibility that must be discharged and that requires action during armed conflict and in peacetime, and at all stages in between. States bear the primary responsibility to protect civilians, and must act strictly in accordance with their legal obligations and their moral duties. In addition, we, the United Nations, must provide the appropriate political, humanitarian and development support necessary to protect civilians.

Civilians in situations of armed conflict suffer in a multitude of ways, including through deliberate targeting, sexual and gender-based violence and displacement. We must address them all at all stages of the conflict cycle. The international community cannot be a passive bystander and idle witness in the face of gross violations against civilians. It is deeply regrettable that, since our last debate on this subject, in June of last year (see S/PV.6790), there has been limited progress in addressing certain situations of grave concern.

In particular, we remain appalled by the deteriorating situation in Syria. Since June, the crisis has intensified. The depth of suffering of the Syrian people is truly dreadful and worsening daily. More than 60,000 Syrians are now believed to have died, and more than 700,000 have taken refuge in neighbouring countries. Our objective is clear, that is, we want an end to the violence and a process of genuine political transition, and we want to see the Security Council apply its collective weight towards those objectives. That is not just our view; it is the view of the Arab League and the vast majority of States Members of the United Nations. We deeply regret that there is still no end in sight and that the international community has been unable to address the situation.

The impact of conflict on civilians around the world remains unacceptably high. The sad truth is that

the perpetrators of appalling, life-shattering crimes still tend to go unpunished. Without accountability there is a culture of impunity for which ordinary people pay the price. Ensuring accountability for the most serious crimes of international concern lies at the heart of protecting civilians and is key to delivering global justice. The International Criminal Court is an essential tool in promoting and ensuring such accountability. The United Kingdom also stresses the importance of international commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions to verify and investigate allegations of serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. The Security Council must support such mechanisms. Justice must be delivered.

In tackling the culture of impunity, the Council must address the range of crimes committed against civilians in conflict, including rape. We must overturn the old assumption that rape is somehow an inevitable byproduct of conflict, and we must confront it. An effective response to sexual violence should be built into every aspect of conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development. The United Kingdom is already taking action to tackle rape as a weapon of war and to improve support for survivors through its initiative on preventing sexual violence. That will involve deploying teams of experts to assist survivors and support local capacity in, for example, areas bordering Syria, Libya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Mali. We are also working in close collaboration with the Office of the United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict to identify additional countries where our team of experts can helpfully be deployed.

The disproportionate impact of conflict on children, who are among the most vulnerable, is shocking. Children should not grow up in a climate of fear, violence and suffering. The United Kingdom condemns all those who target and recruit children in armed conflict despite international pressure. Civilians both inside and outside conflict zones are affected by conflict; refugees and internally displaced persons fleeing the violence are confronted with a struggle for their most basic needs. Humanitarian access is essential for the protection of civilians. We regret that we continue to see humanitarian access to areas in need blocked or constrained. The continued denial of humanitarian access to the states of Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan in the Sudan has created a crisis resulting in nearly 1 million displaced people. The Council has watched that situation worsen for far too long. Humanitarian

access must be protected and expanded, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected States.

The protection of civilians is among the Council's foremost responsibilities. The lives of many depend on the vigilance with which we discharge that responsibility. We must continue to take the steps necessary to protect civilians, and we must use the Council's authority to ensure that States shoulder their primary responsibilities to prevent conflict, minimize suffering and ensure that cycles of conflict and pain are not repeated. I welcome the fact that the Council has united around a strong draft presidential statement — which will be read out shortly — that upholds our commitment to the protection of civilians. We must be guided by the principles and contents of that statement in the months and years ahead.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): We thank the Republic of Korea for organizing this open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, a theme that is important for the Security Council and for the international community. Foreign Minister Kim's decision to preside over the debate is a reflection of the Republic of Korea's commitment to addressing the issue. We congratulate you, Ambassador Kim, and your able team on presiding over the Council in a skilful and capable manner, and for circulating the concept note on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/2013/75, annex).

Pakistan welcomes the presence of the Secretary-General, whose latest report (S/2012/376) and incisive briefings have guided our work on this team. We have also benefited from the insightful presentations of Ms. Navanethem Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Director for International Law and Cooperation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Philip Spoerri, as indeed from the statements of the Foreign Ministers of the Republic of Korea, Rwanda and Azerbaijan. We also commend the representative of the United Kingdom and his able team for steering the negotiations over the draft presidential statement in a most professional manner.

It is a grim reality today that civilians account for the vast majority of casualties in armed conflicts around the globe. They bear the brunt of wars, conflicts and strife. Progress has been made on elaborating a normative framework for the protection of civilians, but it has yet to be fully translated into tangible results. Thanks to the initiative of the Republic of Korea, we will be able to make some progress today

on accountability, humanitarian issues and the implementation of peacekeeping mandates. We endorse the draft presidential statement that the Council will issue today. The message going out from the Council is loud and clear: all parties to a conflict bear the responsibility to protect civilians. They must take sure to ensure the protection of women, children, journalists, refugees and internally displaced persons, who are the most vulnerable in conflict situations. Protection must be given to humanitarian actors, including medical personnel and premises. It is also the responsibility of occupation forces to ensure full respect for international humanitarian law.

We strongly condemn attacks on medical personnel and facilities, as well as on schools and teachers. There should be no impunity for those involved in serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. The Security Council and international tribunals have addressed these concerns in a number of situations, through measures targeted against violators. Because of the proven value of this approach, the Council should persevere with it.

More than a decade ago, when the Security Council first began to address protection issues, there were apprehensions among the wider United Nations membership concerning the Security Council's role and mandate, as well as its ability to deliver. However, the compelling need to protect civilians in armed conflict has led to a broad consensus that such an approach, when pursued objectively and without politicization, produces salutary results on the ground.

It is an established norm that international humanitarian law covers only situations of armed conflict and should not be extended to other situations. For other situations, other forms of law, such as international human rights law, are applicable. That fine distinction must be maintained in order to avoid the occasional drift into reporting about the situations that do not fall within the category of armed conflict.

The protection of civilians is part of many United Nations peacekeeping mandates. Pakistan, as one of the top troop contributors, has worked in many missions in various parts of the world to ensure the protection of civilians. Our peacekeepers are doing so right now in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Darfur, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia.

The protection of civilians remains the primary responsibility of host countries. Peacekeeping missions

should assist host authorities as and where appropriate, in accordance with their mandates. The peacekeepers' ability to perform such mandates is directly linked to the resources available, including intelligence capabilities and the configuration of the missions. Besides, we need to pursue the continuous training of peacekeepers so that operational plans to protect civilians can be refined.

In developing mission strategies and plans, consultations with the host Government or authorities, troop-contributing countries and humanitarian actors must continue. That is simply good practice.

Missions provide physical protection and assist host countries in creating protective environments. The metrics developed by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations provide a good tool for monitoring progress in that context. Yet there should be no misplaced expectations as to what missions can ensure. They cannot provide protection to all civilians all the time. That is why it is essential to bolster national capacities with regard to defence and security forces.

New technologies for gathering information and for surveillance are being used increasingly in armed conflicts for offensive and non-offensive purposes. In that regard, we support the Secretary-General's view that it is extremely important that the use of such technologies should comply with the principles of distinction and applicable international humanitarian law. A clear distinction must also be made, as the Secretary-General has advised us, between the protection of civilians and the responsibility to protect. The conflation of those two concepts has created some legal confusion.

It is important to ensure the safe and unhindered provision of humanitarian assistance, in accordance with the well-established principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, independence and the guiding principles set out in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182, which reaffirm full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States.

There is, of course, a need for consistent engagement on the part of humanitarian agencies with all parties to armed conflict in order to ensure respect for international humanitarian law. Humanitarian actors must conform to and work strictly within the framework of the host country agreements.

Irrespective of the normative progress, success will ultimately depend on how effectively the Council

continues to take action to protect civilians on the ground in situations of armed conflict. The key element in that regard is the impartial handling of all situations by the Council.

I conclude by paying tribute to the peacekeepers and humanitarian actors in the field, who are trying, under very difficult circumstances, to protect civilians.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): I thank you, Mr. President, for the Republic of Korea's leadership in convening this debate today and for Foreign Minister Kim Sung-hwan's presence with us today as well. I also welcome the participation of the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Rwanda, as well as the Foreign Minister of Brazil and the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. I also thank the Secretary-General, of course, for his consistent leadership on protection in all its dimensions and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, and the Director for International Law and Cooperation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Philip Spoerri, for their indefatigable and irreplaceable efforts.

As a member of the Group of Friends of the Protection of Civilians, Australia associates itself with the statement to be delivered later today by the representative of Switzerland on behalf of the Group.

As the Secretary-General has said, the situation with regard to the protection of civilians is, and I use his word, "abysmal". The situation of the most vulnerable — women and children — violates our humanity. There is what should be seen as an irresistible case for the Council and the United Nations system to focus sharply on strengthening efforts to meet the five core challenges that the Secretary-General has identified in his latest report (S/2012/376). My country supports the report's analysis and recommendations, and we will work assiduously with others on the Council, Member States generally, troop- and police-contributing countries and humanitarian actors to take forward those recommendations as a priority.

In shouldering the responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Council must do all it can to prevent and respond to threats of violence against civilians, particularly the most vulnerable, namely, women and children. Protection is not just at the core of the Council's responsibility, it should also be, it must be, the Council's moral compass. More than any other issue,

we will be judged by our actions and by our failures to act in response to protection challenges. We are already judged by our failure in Syria, and we are failing in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile.

So what should we do? I will mention five areas. First, we should bring humanitarian access to the fore and do all we can to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law. Around the world, tens of millions of civilians continue to suffer every day. Although international humanitarian law requires parties to conflict to respect and protect humanitarian personnel whose work is vital to help those victims, we know that those obligations are not being implemented. We have to do better.

Australia is particularly concerned about ongoing attacks against medical workers and facilities, notably today in Syria. More than half of all hospitals there have been damaged or destroyed, and a third of the medical services are not operating. We strongly support the call by the Secretary-General and today's draft presidential statement for the immediate cessation of attacks against medical personnel and facilities. Their deliberate targeting is not only morally abhorrent, it is an unquestioned violation of international humanitarian law, and my country will continue to work with others to improve the protection of medical personnel and facilities and access to them in Syria. Equally, our draft presidential statement necessarily highlights the imperatives to protect schools, teachers and journalists.

Secondly, we should confront the challenge of unregulated small arms and the indiscriminate use of weapons. All too often, as we know, we see explosive weapons being used in densely populated areas. Again, Syria is a particularly egregious example. Parties to conflict must abide by international law, and we support the Secretary-General's recommendation and further action on those issues.

Similarly, some 2,000 people, mostly civilians, many women and children, are killed every day as a result of the illicit and irresponsible trade in weapons. We can fix that. We have a historical opportunity with the negotiations in March to achieve a legally binding arms trade treaty. We must not fail in that opportunity.

Thirdly, we should enforce the protection of civilians mandates within peacekeeping missions. The Council must lead the way in ensuring that peacekeepers are able to protect civilians. We should be pressing for mission-wide protection strategies, including strategies

on early warning and prevention. We have seen such mechanisms in place in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, through the work of provincial senior management groups on protection, which plan the deployment of joint protection teams and provide an essential link with local communities, who, we know, are often best placed to anticipate and communicate protection risks. We must continue to encourage improvements in and sharing of best practices.

Peacekeepers in vastly different peacekeeping operations confront very different obstacles. The threat of conflict-related sexual violence in the Kivu requires a very different response from the response to gang activities in Port-au-Prince or to cattle raiding in Jonglei. The development of mission-specific training is therefore a further crucial step, and we must maintain our focus on operationalizing effective guidance and training materials.

Fourthly, we should foster accountability. Accountability is first and foremost a national responsibility, but the Council has a critical role to play in ensuring accountability. It must exercise its authority, for instance, through referrals to the International Criminal Court and necessary follow-up, and through other mechanisms, including commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions. And it should, where it needs to, mandate peacekeeping missions to help implement its decisions on accountability.

While the responsibility to protect is a different principle from broader efforts to protect civilians, Australia firmly supports the Council's efforts to uphold it. All our leaders have pledged to support the responsibility to protect, and we welcome the Council's acknowledgement of this commitment in the draft presidential statement to be adopted today.

Fifthly and finally, we believe that we should reform the Council's working methods on the protection of civilians. The time has come to work together on a more regular and formalized mechanism of input to the Council that brings together analysis and trends across the whole protection of civilians agenda. We also believe that an annual report of the Secretary-General is needed.

In conclusion, I should like to commend the personnel involved in peacekeeping and political missions, as well as other humanitarian actors and civil society groups, for their enormous service. They are

the front line of protection, and they are all too often inadequately resourced for the challenges they face. The Council must not fail them. We should do all we can to better enable them to perform their essential roles.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I shall begin by thanking your country, Sir, for including the issue of the protection of civilians in armed conflict on the Council's programme of work for this month. We welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea to guide our deliberations.

I also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing on the topic under consideration, as well as Ms. Pillay, High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Mr. Spoerri of the International Committee of the Red Cross for their statements.

One of the international community's principal concerns is ensuring the protection of civilians when a crisis or armed conflict arises to threaten them. Despite the existence of a body law on this subject, including the case law of the international criminal tribunals on the effective protection of civilians in armed conflict, civilians continue to suffer the most serious violations of their rights. Even the early warning systems set up within peacekeeping operations sometimes reveal their shortcomings in effectively protecting civilians. Indeed, civilians suffer violence of all types, including sexual and gender-based violence; cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment; enforced disappearances and obstacles to access to humanitarian assistance.

The conflicts raging in various regions of the world today have caused extensive loss of human life, injury and mass movements of refugees and internally displaced persons. It has also been established that the ratio of civilian to military victims has risen, as evidenced in the conflict in Syria, where over 60,000 people have died, as Ms. Pillay noted early. Moreover, armed conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan, South Sudan and Mali, as well as the recent crisis between Gaza and Israel, have also claimed their share of civilian victims. Furthermore, armed conflicts are also rife with trafficking in humans and their organs. In all cases, unfortunately, it is children, women, the disabled, the elderly and humanitarian, health and media personnel who pay the heaviest toll of such violence. It is all the more shocking that the perpetrators of such acts may paradoxically be the peacekeeping personnel who are supposed to protect civilians.

There are a number of explanations not only for such ongoing serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights in armed conflict, but also for the exponential rise in the number of civilian victims. First among these is the flouting by the parties to conflict of their obligations under relevant international legal instruments in human rights and international humanitarian law in armed conflict, in particular the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocols, together with the customs and laws of war.

Moreover, certain non-State actors do not feel bound by international legal instruments and customary law, or are totally ignorant of their existence. We also note the difficulties of media coverage, which — given the fact that the media are kept far from the theatres of conflict — prevent them from informing international public opinion of realities on the ground. As a result, the media is hard-put to raise awareness among civilians of the precautions they should take and to ensure that they do not engage in activities that might cause them to lose their status as civilians and thereby forego the protection to which they are entitled. Furthermore, the institution of the Protecting Powers under the Fourth Geneva Convention, one of whose roles is to ensure respect for humanitarian law and the protection of civilians, may prove ineffective.

We welcome the efforts of certain international organizations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, to fill that gap so to protect civilians despite their very limited resources. The Security Council itself, given the differences among its members, particularly the permanent members, may have trouble reaching agreement when a crisis, such as that in Syria, erupts.

The deterrence of impunity through international criminal law is also being hindered from becoming operational for several reasons. On the one hand, international commissions of inquiry do not always have the means to establish the facts objectively. Moreover, cooperation between States and international tribunals in the execution of arrest warrants and other decisions tends to be ineffectual.

In the light of the gap between the measures taken and their effective protection of civilians in armed conflict, Togo should like to suggest certain changes.

First, the States concerned should be parties to the relevant international legal instruments, incorporate

them into their national legislation, and ensure their observance. It is also necessary to maximize the role of transitional justice, which hinges on a broad range of judicial and parajudicial measures, including reparations for victims, in accordance with the principle of full satisfaction, in order to ensure the restoration of peace, security and reconciliation.

Secondly, we must design training modules that can be made available to missions and training centres in troop-contributing countries so as to ensure that troops are better informed with respect to the protection of civilians and to prevent potential violence against them. Resolution 2085 (2012) of 20 December 2012, regarding the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali, is a model in that it establishes the precedent of verification of prior training before any intervention and calls for the presence of observers on the ground to ensure the effective respect of international humanitarian and international human rights law with respect to the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

Furthermore, we must urgently provide all peacekeeping operations with early warning mechanisms and the resources and means to monitor and prevent incidents and intervene in real time when incidents occur.

Similarly, it is urgent that we establish sound vertical and horizontal cooperation among the various national, international and regional stakeholders. In that regard, we could consider including in the training for peacekeeping operations some of the African Union's guidelines on the protection of civilians.

Lastly, with regard to the Security Council in particular, the stakes continue to be two-sided. On the one hand, there is a need for this organ to adopt clear and precise mandates that include the protection of civilians. On the other hand, when it comes to combating impunity, the Council should implement the conclusions of the debate that took place on 17 October 2012 (see S/PV.6849), with regard to coherence as to the referrals sent to the International Criminal Court, the financing for those cases, and follow-up to the decisions handed down.

I would like to conclude my statement by underscoring the fact that Togo continues to believe that the surest way to ensure the protection of civilians is to prevent the outbreak of conflicts and crises. That requires promoting preventive diplomacy as much as

possible, which has the advantage of sparing civilians from the effects of armed conflict.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (spoke in French): At the outset, I would like to thank the Republic of Korea for organizing this important open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, presided over this morning by Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Kim Sung-hwan. I also welcome the participation of the Ministers from Azerbaijan, Rwanda and Brazil. Likewise, I would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the director from the International Committee of the Red Cross for their informative statements. Lastly, I wish to thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for leading the consultations on the important draft presidential statement that we will adopt later on.

Since the adoption of resolution 1265 (1999), the protection of civilians in armed conflict has occupied a central position on the agenda of the Security Council, as evidenced by the numerous resolutions, presidential statements and other measures adopted by the Council intended to overcome the major challenges to protecting civilians. The track record of the past 14 years is encouraging, given the significant normative framework that has been developed. However, that is still insufficient both in terms of implementation and impact on the ground.

The report of the Secretary-General published on 22 May 2012 (S/2012/376) describes a difficult situation that often includes a failure by parties to a conflict to abide by their obligations flowing from international humanitarian law and instruments on human and refugee rights.

As the Minister from Rwanda pointed out, the situation of civilians takes on more serious dimensions in the context of recent conflicts, which are spreading in an extremely dangerous manner, as well as in situations involving terrorism, separatism and transnational organized crime. Such situations have become genuine threats to the security and lives of civilians, as well as to national and, at times, international patrimony. The capacity to acquire weapons and secure financing, as well as the dangerous alliances among various groups, mean that civilians are often held hostage by virtue of threats, intimidation and acts of reprisals by such groups. We hope that the next report of the Secretary-General will take up those new challenges, in order that the Security Council can have at its disposal

information and analysis concerning this phenomenon in order to better protect civilians.

Peacekeeping operations with a mandate to protect civilians continue to be an important tool at the Council's disposal. Their effectiveness depends upon sustained support from the international community in ensuring the implementation of mandates by providing the necessary resources to prevent attacks on civilians and to strengthen the capacity of the country concerned to meet its responsibility to protect civilians.

In our quest to better protect civilians in armed conflict, we should continue to pay particular attention to women and children, who are often targeted for extreme violence and every manner of atrocity in time of conflict. Sexual violence, in particular rape, continues to be among the violence to which women and girls continue to be subjected. Children continue to be killed in conflict, often coerced into taking up arms and used as human shields by armed groups and forces. Given their vulnerability, it is incumbent upon all of us to pay ongoing attention to the specific needs of women and children.

Journalists and humanitarian and health workers also pay a high price for their commitment to protecting civilian victims and easing their suffering. This group also has the right to protection.

Conflicts produce thousands of refugees and displaced persons, who are sometimes exposed to inhumane practices on the part of the armed groups that control refugee camps. Those groups also commit grave violations of international law, human rights law and refugee law. Control over civilians by non-State actors in refugee camps, including sometimes the lack of distinction between armed elements and civilians, remains a continuing threat and inhumane practice whereby civilians are forced to live under threat, blackmail and want. In such conditions, complicity — direct or ill-advised — on the part of States hosting camps, as well as the total avoidance of any responsibility on the part of armed non-State groups amount to a denial of rights that is both unacceptable and immoral.

The report of the Secretary-General is clear on this in stating that

“Humanitarian activities continue to suffer from interference by State and non-State actors pursuing a non-humanitarian agenda that results

in the disruption of humanitarian projects and the diversion of assistance" (S/2012/376, para. 14).

It is time that we correct this anachronistic situation by finding lasting solutions. That means registering refugees and carrying out a census in every single situation — steps that are both essential preconditions and permanent obligations in protecting civilians and providing assistance.

Given the challenges on the ground, reducing the number of civilian victims of violence entails long-term efforts based on promoting all aspects of the protection of civilians — legal, humanitarian and security — in all United Nations activities. The Security Council therefore cannot evade the imperative need to establish a protective environment built through development, strengthening capacity, promoting democratic values and peacefully settling political, social and territorial differences before they lead to armed conflict with unforeseen repercussions for civilians. On those two complementary aspects, the work of the Council in promoting and consolidating peace remains crucial and beneficial.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the presence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Mr. Kim Sung-hwan. We thank him for having convened this open debate at such an opportune time and for presiding over it. We regret that our own Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Fernando Carrera Castro, who wanted to join us here, was unable to do so due to a last-minute conflict in his schedule.

We would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his very informative statement and for his ninth report on the matter (S/2012/376). As that report was published in May 2012, it is essential that it be updated. We also appreciate the statements by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, and express our thanks to Mr. Philip Spoerri for his contribution to this debate.

The protection of human life and the protection of civilian populations are at the core of the United Nations mandate and the agenda of the Security Council. However, civilians continue to suffer and are the victims in every conflict, despite the resolutions of the Council on the matter, a solid base of international jurisprudence and the tireless and increasing efforts of the international community with respect to those noble intentions.

It is regrettable that, over and over again and in recent examples such as in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan and Mali, we are compelled to energetically condemn premeditated attacks against civilians and the consequent loss of human life resulting from the use of indiscriminate or disproportionate force. All parties to an armed conflict, whether domestic or transnational, must promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts and undertake their obligations in accordance with international humanitarian law.

Many decisions have been adopted after resolution 1265 (1999), which marked the beginning of a new approach to the protection of civilians in the Council's discussions. However, in most of the reports on the subject, as well as in those on the protection of specific groups such as women and children, we are merely informed of the immense suffering endured by civilian populations and the casualties among them, which invariably surpass military casualties.

In his 2009 report (S/2009/277), the Secretary-General presented the five basic challenges that the United Nations in general and the Security Council more specifically, together with the international community, must address. Those challenges continue to be entirely pertinent, because in most cases we have not yet been able to resolve the problem.

Moreover, as members know, we are now faced with the fact that conflicts are increasingly of an intra-State nature, rather than between two States, which makes intervention by the Council more difficult as these are, strictly speaking, the internal affairs of sovereign States, even if those States are not upholding their primary obligation of protecting their own citizens. Precisely when such situations arise, especially when they are of a flagrant nature, the established principle of non-intervention must be superceded by our common commitment, and even responsibility, to protect civilian populations from mass violations and atrocities inflicted on them by their own Governments.

Guatemala participates actively, through our troops and under the flag of the United Nations, in peacekeeping operations that have strong mandates concerning the protection of civilians, as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, a simple examination of the ratio of peacekeepers to civilians reveals that Blue Helmets cannot guarantee protection for everyone. The protection of civilians also requires significant equipment and logistical support, which

are often insufficient or not available to missions. That gives rise to the broader question of the balance between mandates and resources.

We will continue to work in close cooperation in the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations on the strategies for the protection of civilians in peacekeeping missions. We will do so in compliance with their mandates, international law and full respect for the primary responsibility of host States to protect their own civilian populations. However, we remain concerned about many issues, which I will not mention in my oral statement but which are listed in the text of the statement that we have circulated.

Furthermore, we trust that a legally binding treaty that would establish common international norms that are as strict as possible on the import, export and transfer of arms will be adopted at the final United Nations conference on the arms trade treaty, to be held in New York in March. The lack of such a universal instrument has a high toll in terms of human lives.

We recognize that important steps have been taken in the area of international justice to bring those responsible for violations to justice. The Security Council itself has provided important such examples by creating the International Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, respectively, and in referring the situations in Darfur and Libya to the International Criminal Court. In that regard, it should be stressed that the International Criminal Court is an ally of the Security Council in the fight against impunity for the worst crimes. We should not fail to take advantage of its preventive, dissuasive and punitive capacity. We call on all Member States to ratify the Rome Statute and to cooperate fully with the International Criminal Court.

I would like to conclude with a brief reference to the ample arsenal of preventive diplomacy at our disposal. We would recall that, in 2012, the Secretary-General presented his five-year plan of action, which included promoting the agenda of the responsibility to protect. As I suggested earlier, my delegation fully supports that priority, which in turn contributes to further shaping the subject of today's debate in spite of the differing concepts of the topic, which the Secretary-General himself has rightly brought to our attention.

The important message regarding the responsibility to protect is that it is expected of all members of the international community to observe a pattern of behaviour relevant to their respective populations.

Notwithstanding, committing genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity or provocative actions that lead to those crimes should be considered totally prohibited.

States that do not meet that basic commitment must understand that they will face consequences. Our own heads of State jointly accepted the concept in 2005; the least that we can do now, seven years later, is to offer assurances that this important achievement continues evolving in its practical and operational application. We are pleased that the concept has been included in the draft presidential statement to be adopted today.

In defending the protection of civilians, we send a message of hope and a signal of our firm collective commitment. We are prepared to protect the vulnerable from the scourges caused by conflicts and other violations of peace and security. If we continue to act collectively, in time we will be able to fully fulfil our responsibility to protect our civilian populations.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Luxembourg thanks the Republic of Korea for having organized during its presidency this open debate on a topic that is very dear to all of us, the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Director for International Law and Cooperation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for their very informative presentations. One conclusion is clear: despite all efforts by the international community, notably the Security Council, the situation remains alarming. We must and can do better.

I welcome therefore the draft presidential statement prepared for this debate under the leadership of the delegation of the United Kingdom. It confirms the Council's commitment to protect civilians in armed conflict and strengthens the normative framework.

Luxembourg fully endorses the statement that will be made on behalf of the European Union.

At the most recent open debate of the Council on the protection of civilians, in June 2012 (see S/PV.6790), I focused on the tragic situation in Syria. Since then, the conflict in that country has become even more serious, with the Syrian civilian population as its first victim. The High Commissioner has recalled the staggering number of victims. When civilian populations are slaughtered on such a scale, when international humanitarian law

and international human rights law are violated on such a scale, the principle of accountability must be upheld.

It is for that reason that Luxembourg has supported the Human Rights Council's establishment of the independent international commission of inquiry on the human rights situation in Syria. It is also for that reason that we support, together with many other States, the initiative of Switzerland requesting the referral of the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

In general terms, setting up international commissions of inquiry or fact-finding missions or referrals to the ICC have a preventative and dissuasive effect. The appropriate use of those measures by the Council can strengthen the protection of civilians. When a situation is referred to the ICC, the Council must, however, ensure effective follow-up, as well as give the Court the necessary resources for it to be able to do its work.

Today, 12 February, we observe the international day against the use of child soldiers. In 1996, in her landmark report (see A/51/306), Graça Machel made a powerful call to action, which I would like to echo here:

"It is unconscionable that we so clearly and consistently see children's rights attacked and that we fail to defend them. It is unforgivable that children are assaulted, violated, murdered and yet our conscience is not revolted nor our sense of dignity challenged. This represents a fundamental crisis of our civilization. The impact of armed conflict on children must be everyone's concern and is everyone's responsibility; Governments, international organizations and every element of civil society. Each one of us, each individual, each institution, each country, must initiate and support global action to protect children. Local and national strategies must strengthen and be strengthened through international mobilization" (A/51/306, para. 317).

Today our conscience is revolted, but children continue to be recruited to go to war and they are the first victims of war, in Syria, but also in northern Mali, in Darfur, in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in the Central African Republic and in other crisis situations. As Chair of the Council's Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, Luxembourg commits, with the other members of the Council, to do everything it takes to fight this scourge.

Effectively protecting civilians in armed conflict is not possible without improving access to humanitarian assistance. It is necessary to ensure full, free and unimpeded humanitarian access to affected populations. We appreciate the efforts made to that end by the United Nations, first and foremost by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and by other humanitarian actors, such as the ICRC.

However, all too often, unfortunately, parties to conflict restrict humanitarian access. We see it in Syria today, but also in the Sudanese states of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, where aerial bombardments coupled with the prohibition of cross-border humanitarian operations are trapping the civilian population.

The recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his 2012 report (S/2012/376) to improve the protection of civilians in armed conflict remain entirely relevant. Apart from the principle of accountability and from humanitarian access, which I have already referred to, it is necessary to address three core challenges, namely, enhancing compliance by parties to conflict with international law, enhancing compliance by non-State armed groups and strengthening the mandate for the protection of civilians of United Nations peacekeeping and other relevant missions.

As far as respect for laws and norms is concerned, we must respond to the challenge posed by the rising number of attacks and other acts of interference targeting specifically health-care personnel and infrastructure, a trend which has been well documented, notably by the ICRC. We are also deeply concerned by attacks against teachers and education infrastructure and the use of schools for military purposes and the recruitment of child soldiers.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to condemn the use of explosive weapons, including cluster munitions, in densely populated areas. According to data collected by non-governmental organizations in 2012, at least 25,000 civilians died or were injured by the use of explosive weapons in such areas, with 42 per cent of civilian victims of explosive weapons being children.

To conclude, I would like to pay tribute to the personnel serving in United Nations peacekeeping operations, who are working every day to protect civilians against all forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence. In order for United Nations

operations to fulfil their mandates effectively, we have the responsibility to provide them with the resources that they need. For its part, Luxembourg emphasizes on the necessity to deploy in the field, in every situation where it is necessary and in sufficient numbers, women protection advisers and child protection advisers. Their contribution is indispensable for the work of the United Nations. Luxembourg fully supports them in their difficult task.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Secretary-General, Ms. Pillay and Mr. Spoerri for their briefings.

France endorses the statements to be made by the observer of the European Union and by the representative of Switzerland, on behalf of the Group of Friends on the Protection of Civilians.

For France, the protection of civilians and human rights are a priority. We have proven that in Libya and we have proven that in Mali. At the request of the Malian authorities, France made a timely intervention to halt an offense by terrorist groups that were threatening Bamako. The very existence of Mali was at stake. What we refused to tolerate was the establishment of a terrorist State within Africa. What we prevented was the spread of huge human rights violations like those already committed by terrorist groups in northern Mali — executions, rapes, amputations and destruction of cultural heritage. With Malian troops we liberated Gao and Timbuktu.

In that context, we were mindful that resolution 2085 (2012) stipulated the deployment of human rights and humanitarian law observers, and we call for their swift deployment. Once the situation is stabilized, a United Nations peacekeeping operation will have to take over from our efforts. The protection of civilians will be an integral part of its mandate.

Providing robust mandates on the protection of civilians is a first step, and France is working on that. But it is also crucial to provide peacekeeping operations with the means to implement their mandates. That is what we are attempting to achieve in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The plight of civilians in that country is tragic. The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) now stands at over 2.5 million people. There are 500,000 new IDPs in North Kivu alone since the beginning of the crisis, triggered by the Mouvement du 23 Mars (M-23). Reports indicate that looting, rape, summary executions

and the recruitment of child soldiers continues. With the Congolese army barely able to shoulder its responsibilities and the M-23 still threatening the town of Goma and the region, the actions of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) must be stepped up. That requires bolstering its mandate, as the President of France called for during his visit to Kinshasa.

But the protection of civilians also requires the strengthening the capacities of the Mission. The recent decision of the Security Council to authorize and use drones for observation of the Kivu and border zones will enhance the observation capacities of MONUSCO, and thus its capacity to respond. It will act as a deterrent to illicit arms trafficking and the movement of armed groups.

Finally, the Security Council has also supported the provision of additional helicopters to MONUSCO to ensure greater mobility, and therefore greater effectiveness of the force.

In conclusion, let me mention the battle against impunity. The protection of civilians requires prosecuting perpetrators of serious human rights violations. It is true in Mali — a situation of which the International Criminal Court is seized. Atrocities committed should not go unanswered.

That is also true in the Syrian Arab Republic, where Bashar Al-Assad, ignoring the calls of the international community, continues to kill his own people. The figures that Ms. Pillay gave us today speak for themselves: over 60,000 dead, mainly civilians; hundreds of thousands of people injured; tens of thousands of people missing. In violation of the most fundamental rules of international law, the regime is using all the means at its disposal — heavy artillery, incendiary cluster bombs, ballistic missiles — and all in civilian areas. It spares neither women nor children. While 4 million people need emergency food aid, the Syrian authorities still refuse access for humanitarian aid to all populations in all areas. And they are increasing the number of obstacles to providing that aid. The perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated in Syria, starting with Bashar Al-Assad, will be held accountable to justice.

That is why we reiterate our appeal that the Council refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

It gives no country any pleasure whatsoever to engage in military operations. France did so in Libya, which is now free from the yoke of dictatorship and is on the way to rebuilding after 40 years of dictatorship. It is doing that in Mali in a serious and determined manner while respecting international law as the situation requires. To those who continue to call for inaction, to those who prefer the comfort of words over the risks of action, to those who turn a deaf ear to the calls for help, we put before them the joy of liberated peoples.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China appreciates the initiative of the Republic of Korea in holding this open debate on the question of protecting civilians in armed conflict. We welcome Mr. Kim Sung-hwan, President of the Security Council for the month of February, as he presides over today's meeting. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing. We listened attentively to the statements by Ms. Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Mr. Spoerri, Director for International Law and Cooperation of the International Committee for the Red Cross.

Civilians represent the most vulnerable groups in wars and armed conflicts. In order to protect innocent civilians from harm resulting from armed conflicts, the Council has in the recent past adopted numerous resolutions and presidential statements, thereby playing an active role in promoting the protection of civilians, including women and children. However, civilians in many countries and regions are still subjected to devastation and harm as a result of armed conflict. The international community still faces an arduous task in terms of protecting civilians. China supports the Council in conducting in-depth discussions on the major challenges it confronts in considering the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, effectively promoting related work so as to achieve more constructive results.

I wish to highlight four points.

First, protecting civilians represents an unshirkable responsibility facing all parties to a conflict. All parties to an armed conflict should implement in earnest the Geneva Conventions, international humanitarian law and the relevant resolutions of the Council by making unremitting efforts to protect civilians. The Governments concerned have the primary responsibility for protecting innocent civilians in armed conflict. The concern and help of the international community should not replace the responsibility and obligation of the country concerned, related countries and their

Governments, as well as the parties in response to conduct that violates human rights. As well as contributing to international humanitarian law, to pursue accountability and judicial justice, the first line of action is to fully utilize the domestic judicial system as the main channel.

Secondly, in carrying out actions to protect civilians in armed conflict, it is essential to comply with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular such principles as respecting national sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. It is essential to avoid politicizing the protection of civilians. It is inadmissible to make arbitrary interpretations of Security Council mandates in the name of protecting civilians. It is even less so to carry out regime change under the same pretext. When it comes to protecting civilians, the Council should adopt a consistent position in all situations on its agenda. Double standards or select practices can only damage the authority and the role of the Council. When conducting humanitarian relief operations for the purpose of protecting civilians, it is imperative to observe such principles as humanitarian neutrality and objectivity. Only by winning the trust and support of host countries can we ensure the effective implementation of humanitarian relief operations.

Thirdly, in order to strengthen the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, it is essential to make greater effort in preventing and solving conflicts. The Council should place the protection of civilians in the larger framework of peacefully resolving conflicts. It should actively conduct preventive diplomacy to prevent and contain conflicts. The Council should go out of its way to urge all parties to conflict to resolve their differences through such peaceful means as dialogue and negotiation to achieve political settlement and minimize civilian casualties. Resorting to military means can more often than not result in bigger crises, resulting in more bloodshed and civilian casualties.

Fourthly, when considering a protection-of-civilians mandate for a peacekeeping operation, it is crucial to respect fundamental principles, such as the consent of host countries. Peacekeeping operations should always strictly observe the mandate of the Council by minimizing civilian casualties. However, they should also respect the sovereignty of the host country, ensure objectivity and impartiality and avoid becoming a party to the conflict.

Past experience and lessons learned have shown that the appropriate relationship between the two

aforementioned parties will have a significant impact on the effective implementation of peacekeeping operations. We should also acknowledge that relying solely on the deployment of peacekeeping operations cannot resolve the fundamental issue of the protection of civilians. The Council and the international community should consider the long term by paying close attention to and fully taking into account the conditions prevailing in the host country. As a priority, they should take steps to strengthen the host country's security and judicial sectors and to improve its ability to effectively protect civilians on its own.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We will only touch upon certain aspects of the issue of the protection of civilians in armed conflict, which has been discussed at length. The topic has been on the Council's agenda for almost 15 years. The Council regularly includes the protection of civilians in the mandates of peacekeeping operations. Moreover, the relevant provisions are contained in existing international legal documents.

However, despite the assurance of parties to an armed conflict that they are taking all precautionary measures, reports of cases of the disproportionate or indiscriminate use of force causing civilian deaths continue to reach us from war zones with alarming regularity. Such incidents include medical personnel, teachers, journalists and humanitarian staff, that is, those whom international humanitarian law categorizes as civilians and who should enjoy the unconditional protection of all parties to armed conflict. In that connection, we reiterate that guaranteeing the effective protection of civilians is possibly only by the parties to a conflict fully complying with their international commitments under international humanitarian law.

Far from being theoretical, such problems are of a practical nature, in particular given the fact that resolving such situations directly involves the Security Council. Civilian deaths as a result of the actions of those who should protect them clearly reflect a flaw in the system. Either precautionary measures are insufficient or they occur through the authorities mandated by the Security Council not fulfilling their obligation to protect civilians.

In that regard, unfortunately, we must once again note that, despite the calls of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the circumstances of the civilian

deaths in Libya as a result of NATO air strikes, as reported by journalists and investigated by the Human Rights Council, have still to be duly established. It is a matter of such fundamental issues as the need for scrupulous compliance with Security Council mandates for the protection of civilians and basic ethical norms, such as due apologies and material compensation. The issue of the protection of civilians is all the more in the spotlight in view of the practice of the targeted use of unmanned aircraft or drones, including in a cross-border context.

In that connection, we are concerned both about civilian deaths and the psychological stress inflicted on civilians living under the constant threat of a devastating missile strike. That issue is already a foremost priority of human rights bodies, including the Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism. We call on the Security Council to remain focused on the issue. We believe that it is worth mentioning the positive experience of certain United Nations missions. For example, it seems important to examine in depth the experience of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, which, we understand, has developed a special mechanism for tracking civilian deaths.

In conclusion, we reiterate our position that the international community should take proactive steps to protect civilians, in particular if it involves the use of force, only if endorsed by the Security Council and with fullest compliance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mrs. Pereval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I also commend you for having convened this important open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. As in every open debate on the subject, Argentina reiterates that the Security Council must remain committed to the protection of civilians in armed conflict through the promotion of full respect for international law, in particular international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law, as well as by combating impunity.

Argentina appreciates the report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/376) and its recommendations. Unfortunately, the report is lucid in stating that the state of the protection of civilians remains abysmal. It is therefore imperative to recall that the parties to an armed conflict are bound by the basic norm of

international humanitarian law, which provides that civilians must be protected from the effects of conflict. That obligation, contained in common article 3 of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, is also applicable in the context of armed conflicts that are not of an international character, that is, to non-State combatants.

Argentina not only agrees with the report of the Secretary-General but also particularly thanks the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Pillay, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Director, Mr. Philip Spoerri, because, as well as being present, they both made statements this morning. We appreciate the presence of the highest authorities, which clearly demonstrates that full compliance with international humanitarian law is still a basic challenge for all States. The principles of distinction and proportionality are crucial. We must also recall the basic norm that non-compliance by one party to a conflict does not justify non-compliance by the other.

With regard to the promotion of compliance, it is important that Member States remain committed to ensuring awareness of the obligations imposed by international humanitarian law. In Argentina, international humanitarian law has been included as one of the most important aspects of international law in the curricula of law schools and in the training of the armed and security forces. In addition, Argentina participates in the joint initiative "Reclaiming the protection of civilians under international humanitarian law", one of whose undertakings is a series of seminars to promote compliance with international humanitarian law through practical recommendations. The delegation of Norway will certainly mention that initiative, which Argentina supports.

United Nations work is crucial to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, to preventing the emergence of situations of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and to putting an end to such situations when they arise. My country shares the Secretary-General's observations with regard to the distinction between the protection of civilians in armed conflict and the responsibility to protect. However, to prevent violations of humanitarian law in armed conflict and the four crimes under the responsibility to protect from being committed, prevention is key. In that regard, we highlight the importance of full respect for human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Regarding action by the Security Council, my delegation wishes to underline the need for

peacekeeping operations to comply with international humanitarian law, as well as the need to continue to include protection activities in the mandates of United Nations missions in the field. Those mandates have to be clear, and such missions must be provided with the necessary resources in a timely and effective manner.

As regards the integration of components, it is important to provide the necessary structure and staff in order to be able to protect women and children from all kinds of violence, in particular sexual and gender-based violence.

In that respect, I should like to note that Argentina, in cooperation with the ICRC, has developed courses on humanitarian law for the armed forces, with an emphasis on those that form part of the Argentine contingents in United Nations peacekeeping operations. I note also that the Commission on the Application of International Humanitarian Law has drawn up a manual on international law in armed conflicts, which contains a compilation of the norms of international humanitarian law for the conduct of armed forces in the context of operations. That will be effective only if it leads to the outcome that countries are seeking to achieve when they contribute to peacekeeping operations. We would like here, in drawing attention to the work of all peacekeepers, to commend Argentine peacekeepers — men and women — about whom there has never been a single complaint of violation of human rights or international humanitarian law.

As regards humanitarian assistance, the parties to a conflict must make every effort to ensure effective and timely access of such assistance, including shipments and materials, which enjoys special protection under international humanitarian law. Medical personnel and vehicles, as well as hospitals, must also benefit from such protection.

Fact-finding is another aspect that Argentina deems crucial. Impartial mechanisms are key to determining the facts regarding violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. In addition to ad hoc fact-finding commissions, including those established by the Human Rights Council, we would like to highlight the role of the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission, established under Protocol I to the 1949 Geneva Conventions. Argentina welcomes the fact that, in conformity with the provisions of resolution 1894 (2009), the Security Council has recognized once again, in the draft presidential statement to be adopted later, the possibility of resorting to that Commission.

Lastly, the suffering of victims of armed conflict often continues beyond the end of hostilities, as they continue to be victims when they return to their communities. In that context, in addition to the challenges presented by post-conflict situations, we wish to refer to the role of justice. The Council established two international tribunals — the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda — and, at present, the international community is witnessing the consolidation of an international justice system for the most heinous crimes, including war crimes, that is no longer based on ad hoc tribunals but is permanent: the International Criminal Court (ICC), established by the Rome Statute in 1998. We would like to stress the need for cooperation by all States with the ICC, in particular regarding arrest warrants.

The Council should establish, as soon as possible, a mechanism to follow up closely on its referrals to the ICC. Argentina welcomes the fact that the draft presidential statement to be adopted later makes reference to both to the need for cooperation with the international tribunals and to the commitment of the Security Council to follow up on its decisions in that regard; this is something that has long been hoped for in the context of referrals to the ICC.

Argentina reiterates that, in accordance with international humanitarian law and the resolutions of the Council, attacks of any kind against civilians or other protected persons in situations of armed conflict, as well as the recruitment of child soldiers, all forms of violence against woman and interference with the delivery of humanitarian aid, constitute clear violations of international law.

I would therefore end by urging the fullest compliance with the obligations emanating from the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907; the four 1949 Geneva Conventions, which are universally accepted, and their Protocols of 1977; international human rights law; refugee law and the decisions of the Council. Standards must become reality.

The President: The Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the subject of today's meeting. I thank Council members for their valuable contributions to that statement. In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, I shall take it that the members of the Council agree to the statement, which will be

issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2013/2.

It is so decided.

I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Patriota (Brazil): Let me congratulate the Republic of Korea for assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of February. I also thank you, Sir, for having convened this timely and important high-level debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

I would like to greet Her Excellency Mrs. Louise Mushikiwabo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Rwanda, and His Excellency Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, and thank them for their contribution to this debate.

I am equally grateful to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his very informative briefing, as well as to High Commissioner Navi Pillay and Mr. Philip Spoerri, of the International Committee of the Red Cross, for their remarks.

As we gather to discuss this crucial item on the Council's agenda, our point of departure must be the acknowledgement that, as indicated by the Secretary-General in paragraph 2 of his latest report (S/2012/376), the state of affairs regarding the protection of civilians is "abysmal".

Civilians continue to be injured, displaced and killed in great numbers and subjected to all kinds of hardships in many parts of the world. It is our collective moral and political responsibility to confront this situation and offer improved prospects to civilians facing actual or potential risks.

The difficulties that have prevented us from adequately discharging our responsibilities in the area of the protection of civilians do not stem from differences on the fundamental ethics underlying the concept. They stem from differences that prevent us from translating our common ethics into agreed policies leading to coherent and effective results.

The use of force in the protection of civilians stands out as an issue that divides opinions, compromises efforts towards the peaceful settlement of disputes, and distances us from dealing with the multifaceted issues surrounding protection.

As regards the use of force, a Brazilian concept paper on "responsibility while protecting" (S/2011/701,

annex) was shared with the Security Council in 2011. In our view, resort to military action should always be an exceptional measure, after all peaceful means have been exhausted and only upon the authorization of the Council. If force is authorized, it must be judicious, proportionate and limited to the objectives established by the Council. We must be careful not to worsen situations that put civilians at risk and thus involuntarily contribute to further violence and instability. Furthermore, the Council should assure the wider membership that military action is monitored and resolutions are interpreted and implemented in a way that guarantees that the responsibility to protect is observed. Events in the recent past make us ponder whether direct military intervention and support for armed groups have led to improved circumstances for civilians or to further instability and violence.

However, even as we ponder past experience, we can easily agree on the notion that the most effective way to protect civilians is to prevent armed conflict and, should such conflict arise, to display a real commitment to its resolution by peaceful means. The Charter provides a basis for associating the maintenance of peace and security with the promotion of socioeconomic and institutional development, as well as respect for human rights. I had the opportunity to highlight this aspect in the debate under Brazil's presidency of the Council in February 2011 on the interdependence of peace, security and development (see S/PV.6479).

It is arguable that promoting sustainable development, poverty eradication and food security contributes to the promotion of peace and security by creating a more stable environment for civilians. Conversely, it is regrettable that the world spends enormous resources on the development of weapons and military budgets while we are still short of meeting official development assistance targets, as agreed on in the 2002 Monterrey Consensus. This disturbing situation was described by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in a powerful article published last August. As he said, the world is overarmed and peace is underfunded.

If we are to seriously commit to the protection of civilians, and if we all agree that the primary way to achieve that is by avoiding the emergence of conflict, we must seek to reverse that trend. As the Secretary-General said today, the upcoming conference on an arms trade treaty offers us an opportunity to take a meaningful step and to agree on rules that will help

spare civilians the consequences of poorly monitored flows of arms.

On the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation front, consistent and balanced progress needs to be made. We cannot afford to leave this agenda unfinished. In that context, let me state that the Brazilian Government condemns the new nuclear test carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We urge that Government to fully comply with all the relevant Security Council resolutions on the matter. Brazil also associates itself with the statement to the press read out earlier this morning by the President of the Council.

In the same vein — approaching the protection of civilians as a means to avoid conflict — the Council should fully assume its responsibility regarding the plight of those who are victimized on a daily basis in protracted conflicts, such as that between Israel and Palestine. The protection of civilians must be implemented in a universal and non-selective manner. Civilians should be equally protected against threats of violence, be they in Homs or in Gaza, in Kandahar or Timbuktu. Multilateral efforts should be in line with international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including in the context of the fight against terrorism. In that context, Brazil welcomes the announcement by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights concerning the launch of an inquiry into the civilian impact and human rights implications of the use of drones and other forms of targeted killing for counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency purposes.

We welcome the increased participation of regional organizations, such as the African Union, in efforts towards mediation and conflict resolution in coordination with multilateral efforts, in accordance with relevant provisions of the Charter. At the same time, we must recognize that coordination between the regional and the multilateral has not always been satisfactory, and that improved governance will be required to deal effectively with situations of instability in which civilians are placed at risk.

The complexity of the challenges involved requires inclusiveness in decision-making and in implementing decisions. In that respect, a word on the long-overdue reform of the Security Council is also justified. A more representative and legitimate Council can, and in my opinion will, help lead to decisions and strategies that contribute to avoid conflict and protect a greater number of civilians worldwide. Negotiating and building

common ground is the Council's fundamental task. In that regard, diplomacy is of the essence and should not be equated, as it sometimes is, with a lack of resolve. The phrase "there is no military solution" is being increasingly used and may reflect the recognition that we are entering a phase of greater openness to dialogue, negotiation and diplomacy — a tendency that Brazil would definitely support. Syria certainly comes to mind, and Brazil agrees with those who are of the view that there is no military solution to the Syrian crisis and that the Council should firmly and unequivocally rally behind the efforts of Joint Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi, on the basis of the Geneva plan of action, which clearly opposes militarization.

I believe that, after recent experiences in the use of force for the protection of civilians, the international community can now better appreciate the value of conflict prevention and the peaceful settlement of disputes, including as tools to ensure the safety of those whom it wishes to protect. In conclusion, let me

emphasize the importance of strategies that protect civilians in situations of conflict through non-military efforts. First, we see the need for a broader awareness of the importance of dealing with the prevention of conflict by peaceful means, including through the promotion of social and economic development, intensified efforts towards the full implementation of disarmament and non-proliferation commitments and by seriously confronting crucial challenges such as that presented by Israel and Palestine, among others. At the same time, in situations where conflicts do break out, we see the urgent necessity of placing more emphasis on diplomacy and dialogue as the primary tools for addressing them.

The President: There is still a large number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.55 p.m.



Security Council

Sixty-eighth year

Provisional

6918th meeting

Wednesday, 13 February 2013, 10 a.m.

New York

President: Mr. Kim Sook (Republic of Korea)

Members:

Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
Australia	Mr. Quinlan
Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
China	Mr. Wang Min
France	Mr. Araud
Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
Morocco	Mr. Bouchaara
Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
Togo	Mr. Menan
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

The situation in Burundi

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office in Burundi
(S/2013/36)

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13-23187 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office in Burundi (S/2013/36)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Burundi to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2013/87, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Argentina, France, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2013/36, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office in Burundi.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, China, France, Guatemala, Luxembourg, Morocco, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Togo, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2090 (2013).

I now give the floor to the representative of Burundi.

Mr. Niyonzima (Burundi) (spoke in French): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council — a responsibility that does honour to you and your country. The Council will undoubtedly benefit from your experience and leadership. Through you, Sir, I would also like once again to congratulate the new members of the Council, who are bringing in new

blood and new ways of looking at the issues before the Council.

I would like to point out that we, the partners, do not always understand things in the same way or at the same speed. In spite of the very real difficulties that Burundi faced in 2011, the Security Council considered that our country was on a good trajectory in overcoming the problems. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/36) notes outstanding improvement in all areas and sectors. Resolution 2090 (2013) refers to extrajudicial executions, politically motivated assassinations, a lack of public freedoms and so on. It even mentions the International Criminal Court. My delegation is not enthusiastic about the use of terminology that could cause misunderstanding with regard to the reality on the ground. We regret that lack of flexibility on the part of a number of delegations when it comes to such language. It seems to us unfair, given the efforts that our country has made in areas such as human rights and combating impunity.

In his briefing to the Security Council on 24 January, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Burundi, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, said that "Burundi has continued to make further progress in consolidating peace and stability" and that "Burundi is a far better place to be in and to live in" (S/PV.6909, p. 2). Burundi has made very significant process in all areas.

With regard to the democratic process, Burundi set up the National Independent Electoral Commission on the basis of consensus. We have also adopted a law on the opposition, which will allow for an ongoing political dialogue among political partners.

With regard to strengthening good governance and national institutions, Burundi has adopted a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to combating corruption, set up an anti-corruption brigade and a State inspector general and established a revenue office. We have also set up other institutions, in particular a national council for communications, a national security council, a forum for ongoing dialogue among political parties, an ombudsman's office and so on.

With regard to peace and security, after the stunning success of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme for former combatants, Burundi undertook a security sector reform programme and established a national permanent commission to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

In the area of justice and human rights, Burundi has established an independent commission on human rights, strengthened the independence of the judicial branch and put in place a mechanism for transitional justice. The latter concluded the preparation of legislation on the truth and reconciliation commission, which is now before the Parliament.

We have accomplished many things — too many to enumerate here — that merit praise and commendation from the international community.

Burundi has been on the agenda of the Security Council since 2004. In a few years, we have made great strides in putting our country back on track towards peace, security and stability. The Council is in a very good position to understand what that means.

On the request of the Government pertaining to the end of the commitment of the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB) and its gradual conversion into a country team over 12 months, an official request was addressed to the Secretary-General and reiterated by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Relations and International Cooperation before the Council on 24 January. Resolution 2090 (2013) says

nothing about that. The only mention of BNUB's conversion into a country team relates not to the desire of the Government, but rather to the benchmarks that have been proposed — which some of our partners have judged as unmet for some time. That is why this resolution raises question marks and concerns. The resolution departs completely from the spirit and letter of the report of the Secretary-General to the Council (S/2013/36), which calls for more understanding and assistance for the leadership of Burundi.

The people of Burundi, mindful of their past and confident of their vision for a better future under President Pierre Nkurunziza and his Government, are determined to make progress in fighting for good governance, human rights, democracy and development. The Government of Burundi takes note of today's resolution and reiterates to the Security Council and the international community its full cooperation in addressing pending challenges.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.



Security Council

Sixty-eighth year

Provisional

6919th meeting

 Wednesday, 13 February 2013, 10.20 a.m.
 New York

President: Mr. Kim Sook (Republic of Korea)

Members:

Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
Australia	Mr. Quinlan
Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
China	Mr. Wang Min
France	Mr. Araud
Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
Togo	Mr. Menan
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations
in maintaining international peace and security

European Union

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13-23193 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

European Union

The President: Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Baroness Catherine Ashton, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Baroness Ashton.

Baroness Ashton: I want to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, and the Security Council for inviting me to address the Council on this occasion. I want to congratulate the Republic of Korea on its presidency and membership in the Council, as well as Argentina, Australia, Rwanda and Luxemburg on their election to the Security Council — especially Luxembourg as a first-time member.

I would like today to present the different ways in which, I think, the European Union (EU) contributes to international peace and security. Our contribution should be seen in the context of the strong and long-standing commitment we have to effective multilateralism with the United Nations at its core. I want to pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, a good partner and a good friend. The European Union has always strongly supported his actions. His current efforts to broker peace in the Great Lakes region is just one case in point.

I believe that the European Union's contribution is three-fold: our ability to marshal a wide range of instruments in what we call a comprehensive approach; our direct involvement in international negotiations, including mediation, on behalf of the international community; and our close work with our international and regional partners, where only collective efforts can deliver results. A particular strength of the European Union is its ability to respond to a crisis with a wide range of tools and instruments — short- and long-term, humanitarian and development, security and political.

We are particularly pleased that the long-standing engagement of the EU in Somalia and the Horn of Africa, as set out in the Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa and carried out in close cooperation with the United Nations, has contributed to the recent breakthrough in the political process and in terms of security in that region. Through our missions, we have contributed to greatly reducing piracy; it dropped by 95 per cent over the past two years. Through our development cooperation and political support, we contribute to lasting security, what I have coined "deep democracy" and prosperity.

I was pleased to receive the Somali President, Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who expressed his country's appreciation for the EU's efforts at the end of last month, although he also called for the continued and comprehensive engagement of the European Union and the international community. It is imperative that we all join in that support to ensure effective and continued progress, as the Secretary-General's report (S/2013/69) emphasizes.

Our support to Mali and the Sahel should also be seen in the context of a comprehensive European engagement. The current crisis in Mali provides us with a challenging test case. The threat posed by terrorist groups is a threat not only to the existence of one country, but also to the security of a region and the international community. It calls for swift and coordinated international action, and, of course, the United Nations plays a leading role in that.

The situation on the ground changes rapidly. Thanks to the intervention of France, which responded to the Malian President's appeal for help, we are witnessing rapid advances in the liberation of the north of Mali. We have also seen progress regarding the adoption of a road map by the Malian authorities to restore democracy and constitutional rule and faster deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA). For all that, challenges and threats still remain.

What we have called our comprehensive approach is an integral part of that international response. Humanitarian aid has been increased by an additional €20 million from €58 million in 2012. We have also contributed through security-related measures, such as the EU training mission to help the Malian Army to be restructured under civilian authority. We have given considerable financial and logistical support to AFISMA. We have made available €50 million through

the African Peace Facility and established a clearing house to channel national contributions.

Our political support for Mali focuses on supporting the concrete implementation of the road map, support for the electoral process and, what is extremely important, an inclusive national dialogue, especially with representatives of the people from the north of Mali. We have also provided economic support by resuming EU development aid. We are making available more than €250 million for new projects across the entire country and for budgetary assistance.

It is important that the Malian authorities investigate all allegations of human rights abuses. We support the United Nations intention to deploy human rights observers to Mali, and we welcome the decision by the International Criminal Court to open investigations.

Lasting peace and reconciliation and reconstruction require long-term commitments on the part of the international community. The donors conference on 29 January, as well as the Support and Follow-up Group on the Situation in Mali, the third ministerial meeting of which we were proud to host last week, have helped to further mobilize international support.

But we need to do more. It is important to stress the central coordinating role that has been assigned to the United Nations under resolution 2085 (2012). We appreciate the leadership that the Security Council has shown, as well as the recognition that the Council has given to our efforts. All of us need to support the United Nations in taking on greater responsibility for, for example, peacekeeping, particularly in what will be a crucial stabilization phase.

We will also continue to play our role in the broader framework of our Sahel strategy, and we look forward to working closely with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Romano Prodi, in the context of the upcoming integrated United Nations strategy for the Sahel.

In my role as High Representative/Vice-President, I am responsible for dealing with the Iranian nuclear programme, and, as the Council knows, the Iranian nuclear issue remains at the top of the international agenda. Based on the mandate we have received from the Security Council, and working together with what I describe as the E3+3 Governments, but they are also known as the five plus one group — there are six either way — we are engaging in intensive diplomatic efforts to seek a negotiated solution that meets the

international community's concerns about the Iranian nuclear programme. After very lengthy consultations, we were able to agree on the next round of talks to be held on 26 February in Kazakhstan. We hope Iran will come to that negotiation with flexibility and that we can make substantial progress.

Our strength and credibility in negotiating with Iran derives from the E3+3, but also from the more general support that we receive from the international community. I am very grateful for the constant support of the Security Council, and I would add that our cooperation with and support to the International Atomic Energy Agency is also very important. We remain determined to work towards a solution to the Iranian nuclear issue based on the dual-track approach. There is no doubt that the pressure of sanctions has been instrumental in bringing Iran back to the negotiating table, but sanctions cannot be an end in themselves. The key is for Iran to comply fully with its international obligations.

Like the Security Council, the European Union has condemned in the strongest possible terms the latest nuclear test of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is a further blatant challenge to the global non-proliferation regime and an outright violation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's international obligations not to produce or test nuclear weapons, in particular under Security Council resolutions.

It remains vital therefore that the international community stays united and determined. We will work with key partners, especially with the Council, to build a firm and unified response aimed at demonstrating to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that there are consequences for its continued violations. We once again urge them to abandon their nuclear weapons programme, including the uranium enrichment programme, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

In the European Union, I take responsibility for facilitating the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, between Prime Ministers Thaçi and Dačić. So far this has led to some concrete results. We have an agreement to take forward the implementation of integrated border/boundary management, and as a result four gates are now open and fully operational. We have an agreement on arrangements for the protection of religious and cultural heritage, and we have an agreement to appoint liaison officers to be hosted in the European Union offices in Belgrade and Pristina.

As the Council may have noted, last week the two Presidents, Serbian President Nikolić and Kosovan President Jahjaga, met in Brussels for the first time, marking an important step between Belgrade and Pristina. The process continues; a new meeting with the two Prime Ministers will take place next week in Brussels. I want to take this opportunity to commend Prime Minister Dačić and Prime Minister Thaçi for the way they have approached these discussions, and for the courage they have shown in doing so. It is not an easy process for either of them, but they have our full support, and I also count on the support of the Council.

We are also working closely with partners to address some of the more difficult challenges to international peace and security. Here, I want to mention briefly Syria and the Middle East peace process. In the Middle East peace process, we believe that the time has come for concrete steps to be made towards peace, to see direct and substantial negotiations and to achieve a lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on two States — a solution that addresses both Palestinian aspirations to statehood and sovereignty and Israeli concerns about security. We believe there is an urgent need for renewed, structured and substantial peace efforts in 2013 that will require work with all international partners, including the United Nations and the League of Arab States. The European Union position remains that we will not recognize changes to the pre-1967 borders other than those agreed by the parties.

We suggest that the following parameters could be a basis for resuming negotiations. We see security arrangements that respect the Palestinians' sovereignty, protect Israel's security and prevent the resurgence of terrorism as key. There must be an agreed, just and fair solution to the question of refugees, and a fulfilment of the aspirations of both parties for the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of both States.

It will be important to set up an internationally supported framework for negotiations. I would like to highlight in this regard the role of the Secretary-General in the Quartet, and to strongly support the important work done by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and Special Coordinator Robert Serry on the ground. We will continue to work with all those who are willing to join the quest for peace, stability and prosperity in the Middle East, and in so doing to recognize the critical importance of regional involvement. We think of Jordan

and the role that His Majesty the King has played, and of other Arab nations, including at this time the role of Egypt in what has happened in Gaza, and, of course, the whole question of Palestinian reconciliation. All of us, I would argue, should engage.

In our efforts to support Syria, we coordinate closely with all partners at the bilateral, multilateral and inter-institutional levels. We give lasting support to the United Nations through common actions and initiatives, which are crucial to preserving the role of the Security Council. That includes tackling grave human rights abuses and war crimes.

We stand firmly behind the complex mission of Joint Special Representative Brahimi. We hope his plans will result in concrete initiatives by the Council to make the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex) operational. We also welcome the recent statements made by the President of the Syrian coalition, Sheikh Mouaz Al-Khatib, who has proposed launching discussions with acceptable representatives of the Syrian Government. We encourage the Syrian authorities to seize this opportunity. If together we can set up the right conditions and a timetable for discussions and add important confidence-building measures, we might be able to build new momentum for what has so far been a most difficult challenge.

But in addition to our political efforts, we have remained an important donor of humanitarian aid to Syria; the financial support of the EU and its member States is now €600 million. We have also imposed EU-wide sanctions against the regime, and we are working on improving the operational capacity of the Syrian opposition coalition, which we accept as a legitimate representative of the Syrian people.

It will be equally important to engage in planning for the future and to closely involve the Syrian opposition coalition in that process. The EU will support a political transition with effective measures on the ground, institutional and economic recovery, post-conflict accountability and needs-disaster assessment.

I have not been able today to refer to all the various contributions of the EU to the work of the United Nations. I have very much limited myself to what are perhaps the most pressing issues. But we harbour a strong belief in effective multilateralism and wish to be a good and supportive partner to the United Nations. Let me end by acknowledging the great responsibility of the Council for steering the international community

away from conflict and confrontation. In carrying out its tasks, it can count on the full commitment and support of the European Union.

Mr. Araud (France) (spoke in French): I would also like to welcome the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. France naturally associates itself with the European Union's vision and commitment in the service of an effective multilateralism in full cooperation with the Council, which she has just briefed us on.

I would like to emphasize three aspects of the European Union's contribution to achieving the goals of the United Nations. First, the European Union remains a unique model of cooperation and integration in the service of peace and security on the continent of Europe. As Ms. Ashton explained, today the European Union is playing its part in the very heart of the continent, in the Balkans, where war once raged. It promotes bilateral dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo and offers them a prospect of integration within a larger geographic context. Kosovo's period of supervised independence came to an end without incident on 10 September of last year. That is a success for the entire international community and one that the European Union can fully share in. The opening at the highest level of a new phase of political dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, under the auspices of the European Union, expands that effort. I also commend last week's meeting in Brussels between the Serbian and Kosovar Presidents. This dialogue confirms the willingness of both parties to normalize relations in the context of their European rapprochement, which, we hope, will enable the two countries to turn the page on their conflicts.

The European Union also possesses the tools needed to act beyond the European continent in the service of the system of collective security of which the Council is the cornerstone. Exactly two years ago, the High Representative briefed the Council (see S/PV.6477) on the creation of the European External Action Service, an important milestone in the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty. Since then, these developments have helped to strengthen the European Union's contribution to collective peace and security and thus to become a valuable partner for the United Nations. To give a few examples, as Ms. Ashton said, the African forces that make up the African-led International Support Mission in Mali, authorized by resolution 2085 (2012) in December, began their deployment in support of the Malian armed forces in restoring State security.

Through the African peace facility, the European Union helps by contributing to paying their wages.

It also provides support in reshaping the Malian defence apparatus. The deployment, beginning in mid-March, of a European Union training mission is also part of the same goal of restoring Malian sovereignty. The mission, which is 500 people strong and includes 172 trainers, will also provide for the training in one year of four battalions of 650 Malian soldiers each. Its support in the quest for a political solution in Mali demonstrates the European Union's global approach, according to which they have recently managed to release their economic aid to help restart the country's development and thus lay the foundations for a sustainable peace.

Furthermore, on another topic, despite the ongoing stalemate in the Council, the European Union has made a firm commitment to a democratic transition in the Syrian Arab Republic. That is why it was swift to condemn the bloody oppression carried out by the Bashar Al-Assad regime and considers the Syrian national coalition as the legitimate representatives of the Syrian people. It has shown, in this crisis, its willingness and ability to act. Starting in May 2011, the European Union deployed a wide array of individual, financial and trade sanctions against the regime. With over €400 million delivered in humanitarian assistance, the European Union and its member States have provided significant aid to ease the plight of the Syrian population, including refugees. The European Union has always supported the efforts of the Joint Special Representative to find a political solution to the conflict.

On the Iranian nuclear issue, the High Representative has been intervening as a facilitator in the dialogue with Tehran. We thank her for her intensive efforts and exemplary commitment, working alongside the E3+3 Governments, to keeping the door to dialogue open. A new meeting with Iran will take place in Almaty on 26 February. It will be an opportunity for Iran to make, without further delay, the goodwill gesture that the international community expects from it in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the resolutions of the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors. As long as Iran does not comply with its obligations, we will fulfil our responsibilities and increase pressure in order to convince it to abandon its policy of isolation and provocation.

The European Union and its member States are fully committed to playing their role in that issue, setting up a very strong sanctions apparatus. We continue to believe that firmness is still the best guarantee for the achievement of a long-term diplomatic solution, which is the goal we all share.

Finally, the European Union provides support to the work of the Security Council on several crosscutting issues, showing thus that it is a major partner of the United Nations in defining prospects for progress in international affairs. It promotes the role of women in crisis exit strategies, as is the case in Afghanistan, through the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan, where a clear effort has been made to increase the number of female police officers.

With respect to the protection of children in armed conflict, I thank the European Union for the ongoing support provided to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

I will conclude by recalling that the special role played by the European Union led two years ago to the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 65/276. That resolution affirmed the role of the European Union as a partner, pillar and friend of the United Nations, not just as a regional organization but also as a pillar of a coherent and effective international system.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): I would like to thank the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Baroness Catherine Ashton, for her statement, insights and analysis on a number of contemporary challenges to global peace and security.

The establishment of international peace and security is an important task that cannot be accomplished by a single entity acting alone. Cooperation, communication and assistance among the responsible actors are vital. That spirit unites the United Nations and the European Union and leads them to merge their efforts for the preservation of global peace and security.

There is an established pattern of cooperation between the two entities in a variety of areas, including, in particular, peacekeeping and conflict prevention, the protection of human rights, sustainable development and the environment, development assistance, and combating terrorism and other criminal activities. Strengthening that cooperation and the continued contribution of the European Union to the efforts of the Security Council and the United Nations more

broadly are indispensable in addressing challenges to international peace and security.

I would like to speak more specifically about some geographical and thematic issues. The situation in the Middle East with regard to both the Middle East peace process and the Syrian Arab Republic still occupies the top position on the list of international security issues. While it has been exposed to conflicts and insecurity for many decades, the region has also gone through major transformation processes over the past two years. The international community must be more united and consistent in its efforts to help the regional States through these difficult times and find a peaceful and lasting solution to ongoing conflicts.

Another challenging issue is the situation in Mali, where decisive action has enabled significant advances in the restoration of Malian territorial integrity. It is essential that the international community stand ready to undertake efforts for peacebuilding, governance, security sector reform, reconstruction and regional cooperation.

At the same time, Mali is not the only country facing terrorism and violent separatism. It is therefore important to maintain consistency in deciding on responses to such situations, especially those aggravated by external political, military and economic support in violation of international law and Security Council resolutions.

Issues relating to the protection of civilians in armed conflict and the rule of law have become some of the major topics on the international agenda. However, despite increasing attention to those topics, issues of accountability in certain conflict or post-conflict situations have often been overlooked. As a result, erroneous policies and behaviours that contradict international law and its basic norms and principles have often been allowed to remain, under the cloak of impunity, and garner the potential of further destabilizing the situation by thwarting the achievement of peace and fomenting future conflicts and related crimes. We believe that the international community cannot approach selectively, or remain indifferent to, situations involving the use of military force against civilians and massive expulsions. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that such violations and other serious wrongdoings have indeed occurred during armed conflicts and have given rise to valid international concerns, an obligation to investigate and prosecute alleged offences, as an important safeguard

and tool for prevention, will definitely serve the principles of justice and the rule of law. We encourage the European Union to continue to assist the affected countries and support national and international efforts to that end.

It is essential, when dealing with conflict and post-conflict situations, that the relevant organizations and entities ensure that peace and justice are both present in a mutually reinforcing manner. Such an approach ensures that no peace settlement is reached that is inconsistent with international law. That understanding is particularly important, as it would provide guidance not only for the parties to the conflict but also for the international community as a whole and, when appropriate, mediation efforts.

In situations of unresolved conflict, the lack of agreement on political issues cannot be used as a pretext for marginalizing problems caused by continued and deliberate disrespect for international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law. It is therefore crucial to insist on the importance, with respect to such situations, of reaffirming the continued applicability of all relevant international legal norms and standards. We encourage the European Union to consistently address concerns in that regard and support relevant national initiatives to that end within the United Nations. At the same time, it is also important to carefully approach ideas having the initially declared purpose of fostering confidence-building measures but that in reality carry the danger of sustaining the status quo created as a result of the unlawful use of force and the commission of other serious crimes of concern to the international community.

In conclusion, let us express the hope that increased efforts and more intensified cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union will yield better results in dealing with the many existing challenges to international peace and security.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this briefing. I join previous speakers in welcoming Mrs. Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and I thank her for her briefing. As a European, I fully subscribe to Ms. Ashton's statement. I assure her of my country's full support in the Council, in the context of her mandate, to strengthen cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations in promoting international peace and security.

As a founding member both of the United Nations and the European Union, Luxembourg appreciates the values shared by the two organizations. In the words of the Charter of the United Nations, those values include

"faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small".

The United Nations and the European Union have the same goal of promoting peace. Each represents a peace project born of the same desire to protect future generations from the scourge of war.

This third presentation to the Council by the High Representative, following those of 2010 and 2011, clearly shows that the European Union remains a reliable partner of the United Nations. The 27 members of the European Union contribute more than one-third of the ordinary and peacekeeping budgets of the United Nations. The European Union and the United Nations closely cooperate at Headquarters and on the ground. The European External Action Service and the United Nations Secretariat maintain continuous contact. Our joint actions now involve all aspects of responding to international crises, in particular emergency crisis management, humanitarian efforts, peacekeeping and peacebuilding and development.

Allow me to echo the High Representative in highlighting two examples that illustrate the synergy of efforts undertaken by the European Union and the United Nations in Africa — in Somalia, in the regional context of the Horn of Africa, and in Mali, in the regional context of the Sahel. Since 2011, the European Union has developed its Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa, which emphasizes the need to link security, the fight against poverty and good governance. In Somalia, the significant support of the European Union relates to those three areas.

Since its launch in March 2007, the European Union and the United Nations have supported the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). To date, the EU has contributed more than €400 million to pay the salaries of the Green Helmets and the Mission's operations in Nairobi through the African Peace Facility. AMISOM's contribution to security in Somalia is inestimable, and for now remains essential. In the medium-term, it will be up to us to decide how the international community will support Somalia in order to ensure that the Somali National Security Forces — which are supported by

an EU training programme — will be able to assume responsibility for their country's security.

Also in 2011, the European Union developed its Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel. In recent months, the international community's attention has rightly focused on Mali to respond to the multifaceted crisis affecting that country. The European Union and the United Nations are dynamically engaged politically, militarily and financially to respond to a situation that threatens regional and international peace and security. In the next few months, the synergy between the European Union training mission in Mali and the stabilization mission to be established under the auspices of the United Nations will be crucial. Beyond the crisis in Mali, it is now urgent that the United Nations also develop an integrated strategy on the Sahel.

The European Union is actively committed also in the Middle East, playing a key role in the efforts of the international community with respect to the nuclear programme in Iran. Europe maintains a firm attitude in that regard, while calling for diplomacy and dialogue. We therefore welcomed the announcement that negotiations will resume between Iran and the E3+3 in Almaty on 26 February, after several months of interruption. Like the High Representative, we express the hope that those discussions will lead to significant progress towards achieving a negotiated solution.

In Syria, the situation on the ground continues to deteriorate day by day. A protracted conflict will lead only to the destruction of the country. Every effort must be made to promote a negotiated political settlement of the crisis. At the start of the week, as was noted, Mr. Al-Khatib once again called upon the Syrian authorities to follow up on their initiative to talk with the aim of ending the bloodshed. We hope that the Damascus authorities will respond to that request for dialogue extended by the head of the Syrian National Coalition. As the High Representative mentioned, it will be necessary for the European Union and the United Nations to continue to work hand in hand at the political level and to provide assistance to the affected populations in Syria and in neighbouring countries.

I would like to add a comment on the peace process in the Middle East. We of course support the efforts made by the European Union as a member of the Quartet, along with the United Nations, the Russian Federation and the United States, to foster a resumption of direct talks between the Israelis and the Palestinians. If there

is an area where close cooperation and engagement have added value, it is there. When the talks resume — which we hope will happen soon on the basis of a structured framework and the parameters indicated by the High Representative — the parties will require appropriate international support and determined commitment on the part of all key stakeholders.

Finally, allow me to highlight a subject that is dear to our hearts — the protection of children in armed conflict. Yesterday we celebrated the International Day against the Use of Child Soldiers. We welcome the joint press statement on that subject issued by the High Representative and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflicts, Ms. Leila Zerrougui. For 10 years now, the European Union has taken a stance on children in armed conflict. The European Union and its member States can promote the protection of children in armed conflict through political dialogue and cooperation measures.

Luxembourg particularly welcomes the European Union initiative to allocate its Nobel Peace Prize money to projects devoted to child victims of war. In particular, that initiative will help to revive hope among Syrian refugee children in Iraq and the children displaced by the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo by providing them with access to basic education. In that area as in others, the European Union and the United Nations can make a difference by working together and in complementarity. Luxembourg pledges its continuous support to strengthen that partnership.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): I would like to thank High Representative Ashton for her briefing and welcome her to the Council for the third time in this capacity. Since she last briefed the Council, the European Union (EU) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The award recognizes the EU's powerful and historic contribution over six decades in advancing peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights.

The EU is, of course, a unique experiment among nation States, born out of the most violent century in human history. All of us have a keen interest in its success. As the Council now more acutely knows, close cooperation between it and regional organizations, including the EU, can be a decisive component in our collective efforts to maintain international peace and security. Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations recognizes that. As a long-standing, integrated regional organization that has learned many lessons of its own over the years in developing and improving

normative frameworks for dealing with conflict and post-conflict situations, the EU is strongly placed to make a strong contribution in that regard.

I would like to thank High Representative Ashton for her hopeful analysis on some of the contemporary issues on the Council's agenda. The EU's engagement on those issues is an indication of its own strong contribution to international peace and security. We endorse her condemnation of North Korea's latest, third nuclear test. The Council itself is united in that condemnation. There have been threats of a second and even a third nuclear test to follow the one earlier this week. We must now develop a strong draft resolution with tough new sanctions. We will certainly be working closely with all Council members, including members of the EU, to achieve that quickly.

We welcome the role the EU plays in Africa in support of the African Union. The EU's assistance to the African Union Mission in Somalia has been central to the Mission's role in achieving security gains, which in turn have helped bring Somalia to a point where it can embrace the best chance it has had in a generation to build sustainable peace and stability.

We acknowledge and appreciate the EU's efforts to address the crisis in Mali through the EU training mission and support to the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) through the Africa Peace Facility. Making AFISMA operational as soon as possible remains vital whatever the final peacekeeping configuration in Mali may be. Alongside that security effort, the EU's very significant humanitarian and development assistance is an important contribution to restoring stability in that country.

On the Syrian Arab Republic, we share the EU view that the international community must do everything it can to promote a credible Syrian-led political transition to realize the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people. We also support the EU's view that those responsible for serious crimes in Syria should be held accountable. We appreciate the very significant contribution the EU is making to provide humanitarian assistance, and we encourage the EU in its efforts to ensure that its aid is delivered as effectively as possible. We will continue to work together with the EU in support of Joint Special Representative Brahimi, and agree that the Council needs to provide clearer support soon to his complex mission. We will also continue to work closely with the EU to advance one particular aspect of our collective

humanitarian effort — the protection of medical workers and facilities in Syria.

This is a decisive year for the Middle East peace process. The prospect of a two-State solution is quickly disappearing. We agree with the High Representative that it is time for new effort to resuscitate the peace process. The continued support of the EU to the Palestinian Authority and its active participation in the Quartet remains essential. EU activism in support of renewed negotiations will be influential.

Regional tensions in the Middle East will only increase, as we know, unless Iran engages with the five plus one process and cooperates fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Australia appreciates the EU's critical role in pursuing dialogue with Iran to find a diplomatic solution to the international community's strong concerns about its nuclear programmes. We commend the High Representative for her personal engagement on the Middle East peace process and the Iran nuclear issue.

We also commend her role in relation to Kosovo, an issue the Council will consider next week. By mediating high-level dialogue, the EU has certainly helped to open a new constructive phase in negotiations, which has been achieving progress towards agreed solutions to outstanding differences between Belgrade and Pristina.

Australia and the EU are very close partners in global security. We work together in Afghanistan. We cooperate closely on aid delivery through joint projects in the Pacific and Indonesia, and this will soon extend to delegated cooperation arrangements elsewhere, including South Sudan and Fiji. We work closely in international sanctions regimes.

We acutely recognize that the EU and its member States play a very substantial role as partners to the United Nations. Together they form the single largest financial contributor to the United Nations system, providing a sizeable proportion of the United Nations regular budget, at almost 40 per cent, and to the United Nations peacekeeping budget, at over 40 per cent. Of course, its support is absolutely indispensable to United Nations funds and programmes. That contribution enables the EU to act as an essential multiplier of our collective efforts on peacekeeping, peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

The EU's efforts to promote democracy and the rule of law are important. Its expertise helps build capacity and promote reform in law enforcement, the judiciary

and border security. Through its election observation missions in particular, the EU has helped to deepen public trust in electoral processes and to deter voter fraud, intimidation and violence.

Its actions to tackle piracy deserve particular recognition. We commend the EU Naval Force for its work off the Horn of Africa, which has contributed to reducing Somali piracy to its lowest level since 2008. We value the EU as a continuing partner in the fight against terrorism and support its efforts to ensure that counter-terrorism remains a key priority for us. We welcome the EU activities on preventing terrorism by addressing terrorist radicalization and recruitment.

To conclude, close engagement between the Council and regional organizations is self-evidently an essential component to securing international peace and security. We encourage the Council to continue to look for opportunities to work closely with the EU in particular in that primordial objective.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. We would also like to thank the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms. Catherine Ashton, for her informative briefing on the activities of the European Union in the various areas that bring us together.

The delegation of Guatemala takes this opportunity to express its gratitude to the European Union for its constructive presence in the United Nations and its important role in many activities, ranging from cooperation and development to peacekeeping, and for the contributions of its member countries to the United Nations budget.

On this occasion, I would simply like to make six brief comments, all on topics covered in the briefing of High Representative Catherine Ashton.

First, in the case of non-proliferation talks between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran, we are concerned over the deadlock in the process, and we urge the European Union to persist in its efforts. We note the additional sanctions that the European Union has applied against Iran with the ultimate aim of weakening the actions that would allow it to develop a nuclear programme. We welcome the announcement that the upcoming round of talks between the E3+3 Governments and the Islamic Republic of Iran will take place in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 26 February. We hope

that all parties will make their best efforts to find a negotiated solution acceptable to all, bearing in mind the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Power.

Secondly, with regard to the peace process in the Middle East, Guatemala believes that the European Union, as a member of the Quartet of core international mediators, must step up its efforts to encourage Israel and Palestine to seek a solution to the age-old conflict between them. We should spare no effort towards achieving the ultimate aim of identifying common ground in order to resume negotiations.

Thirdly, as for the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, we note that the policies of the European Union from the outset of the conflict have been based on the following actions: supporting the efforts of the United Nations and the League of Arab States to find a political solution to the conflict and to encourage a political transition; exerting pressure on the regime through the application of unilateral sanctions; and using debates within the Security Council and the United Nations system to exert pressure on the Syrian authorities.

However, those actions have not led to strategic success, since the Government has yet to commit to a serious political dialogue on the future of the country. On the contrary, while the Syrian army and the armed opposition continue to commit human rights abuses and violate international humanitarian law against the civilian population, the violence seems to escalate every day. We welcome the role of the European Union in the area of humanitarian assistance and acknowledge that its member States are the largest bloc of donor countries providing humanitarian assistance in the Syrian crisis.

Fourthly, with regard to its mediating role for the normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo, we congratulate the European Union, in particular High Representative Ashton, on the leadership in the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. That new phase of mediation, which led to the convening of the first high-level meeting, took the process from a primarily technical to a political level, offering new prospects for resolving various long-standing issues. We encourage the parties to continue those efforts in line with the existing legal framework, namely, resolution 1244 (1999).

Fifthly, with regard to Mali, we welcome the logistical and financial support provided by the European

Union to the African-led International Support Mission in Mali. We commend the establishment of a European Union training mission in Mali in order to train the Malian armed forces in supporting the restoration of the country's territorial integrity. The mission is an integral part of the European Union's comprehensive approach to the situation in Mali and the Sahel region. We look forward with great interest to its launch in the coming weeks. We also congratulate the European Union and the High Representative Ashton on having hosted the ministerial meeting of the Support and Follow-Up Group on the Situation in Mali in Brussels on 6 February, at which the international community underscored, among other issues, the importance of respecting international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians in Mali.

Finally, Guatemala has always supported a broader development of and greater cooperation among the United Nations, the Security Council and regional and subregional mechanisms. Such cooperation should take place on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Chapter VIII. As a regional mechanism, the European Union has established close and fruitful cooperation with the United Nations on a wide range of key areas. We will continue to support the further strengthening of that cooperation.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to welcome Baroness Ashton, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union, and to thank her for briefing the Council on the cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security. The European Union has been an important partner of the United Nations in the area of peace and security. In recent years, the European Union has actively participated in the discussions within the Council on regional hotspots and thematic topics.

The European Union has been working closely with United Nations in carrying out preventive diplomacy, providing good offices and promoting the settlement of disputes through peaceful means, such as mediation and negotiation, as well as through strong support to United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions. The European Union also actively participates in the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission and plays a very positive role in peacebuilding in conflict-affected and post-conflict countries.

We acknowledge the great importance that the European Union attaches to its cooperation with other

regional organizations. Recently, certain hotspot issues in Africa, such as Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, have become more prominent. The European Union has maintained close coordination with the African Union and African regional and subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, in providing strong assistance to their good offices and capacity-building efforts.

China appreciates the significant contribution of the European Union in maintaining regional and international peace, stability and security. It encourages and supports the European Union in continuing to play a positive and constructive role in that regard.

Dialogue and consultation are the fundamental way to bridge differences and to prevent and resolve conflicts. While the European Union has extensive experience and resources in that regard, various regional and subregional organizations have a profound understanding of and unique advantages concerning regional issues. The Security Council should strengthen its communication and coordination with various regional and subregional organizations, including the European Union, in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular on the basis of more pragmatic and effective cooperation in maintaining international peace and security.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): We welcome High Representative Baroness Ashton to the Security Council and thank her for her briefing on the European Union's cooperation with the United Nations. We join Australia in congratulating the European Union on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize.

Pakistan and the European Union enjoy excellent relations. The European Union is an important trading and development partner of Pakistan. Our country attaches the highest importance to cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Over the years, the European Union has become a major cooperation partner of the United Nations and has made important contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security. African issues constitute the bulk of the Security Council's agenda. Although the African Union and African subregional organizations are currently working actively to resolve

conflicts in Africa, they face funding and capacity problems. The European Union has provided significant support to peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities in Africa. It has provided substantial funding for United Nations-mandated African Union peace support operations and plays an active role in post-conflict peacebuilding efforts on the continent.

The Sahel region faces serious security, humanitarian and socioeconomic challenges that have negative consequences for the long-term stability of the region. They include chronic food insecurity, underdevelopment, the impact of climate change and the rise in organized crime, including terrorism and the trafficking of drugs and weapons. The outflow of refugees from Mali, for instance, has placed an additional burden on neighbouring countries, which have already suffered from the consequences of drought. The enormous challenges in the region can be addressed effectively through a coherent strategy. The region lacks capacity and resources. It needs the support of the international community.

In that context, Pakistan supported the elaboration of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel region. The European Union is already making a significant contribution to the Sahel region through its Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel. In addition to the funds pledged under the Strategy, the European Union has also made a commitment to address the humanitarian situation in the region. We hope that the European Union will continue to support the region and to provide resources for the United Nations integrated strategy, which we expect to be finalized soon.

The situation in Mali poses a serious threat to the peace and security of the region and beyond. The crisis in Mali stems from internal causes, as well as the overall situation in the wider Sahel region. Following the French intervention, the situation has significantly improved, but the country requires sustained support on the part of the international community to consolidate peace and restore full constitutional order.

We welcome the European Union's decision to provide training to the Malian defence forces through the deployment of the European Union's training mission, as well as its commitment to contribute to the funding of the African-led international support mission for Mali, through the European Union African Peace Facility. We hope that, as a clearer picture

emerges regarding the country's needs, the European Union will offer further assistance to Mali.

The European Union has also made an important contribution to consolidating peace in the Balkans. The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo is providing support to Kosovo in the area of the rule of law. The European Union-mediated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina has helped to bring the two sides together to resolve their outstanding disputes. The recent elevation of the dialogue to the level of Prime Ministers is an important contribution, made by Baroness Ashton herself.

The Syrian crisis has assumed catastrophic proportions. According to the Secretary-General, more than 70,000 people have died there. An estimated 4 million Syrians, including 800,000 refugees and 2 million internally displaced persons, need humanitarian assistance. The pursuit of the military option has fuelled this devastating internecine strife for the past two years. The Syrians, as one nation, have to reconcile their differences through dialogue.

With the recent statements of the opposition and the Government for dialogue without preconditions, there is a glimmer of hope for engagement. This opportunity must be seized by the Syrians, the United Nations and the European Union. Full support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and Joint Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi will help in making the Geneva communiqué operational and giving a fresh impetus to diplomacy.

We welcome the results of the donors conference held in Kuwait on 30 January, where the international community was able to pledge \$1.5 billion. We hope that those pledges will be fulfilled and materialized expeditiously to alleviate at least some part of the suffering of the Syrian people. We appreciate the humanitarian assistance that the European Union is providing to the affected people of Syria.

The Security Council has invested considerable time and effort to address the Iranian nuclear issue. It is time to reflect on and to review the objectives and strategy pursued so far. A peaceful resolution of this issue is possible on the basis of confidence-building measures while pursuing the goals of non-proliferation and respecting Iran's right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

We encourage the E3+3 and Iran to stay the course of meaningful engagement, build on the talks they have

held so far and deepen the diplomatic process for a negotiated resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue. We hope that the talks to be held on 26 February will make some headway.

We welcome Baroness Ashton's statement that the Middle East peace process should be launched again. The European Union and the Secretary-General, as members of the Quartet, can play an important role in reviving the completely stalled process. The two-State solution is in freefall. The European Union can help in reversing that trend by putting its collective political moral weight behind the efforts to persuade key States and players to come back to the negotiating table.

In conclusion, we welcome the Security Council's continued engagement and exchange of views with the European Union. We encourage the ongoing cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations. Such cooperation plays an effective role in conflict prevention and in the resolution of conflict and post-conflict situations.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): I join others in welcoming Baroness Ashton to the Council and thanking her for giving us her briefing today. These meetings are an important step in broadening and strengthening the European Union's relationship and collaboration with the United Nations and in highlighting areas where the European Union (EU) and the United Nations are already cooperating successfully in pursuit of their shared objectives.

In Syria, where the situation continues to worsen, the United Kingdom and, indeed, the European Union have remained steadfast in our support of Joint Special Representative Brahimi and his plan to take forward the establishment of a transition Government with full executive powers. We encourage others to do the same, recognizing that Al-Assad cannot be part of such a transition if it is to realize the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.

In support of transition, the European Union has introduced measures against the Al-Assad regime, imposing sanctions against those responsible for the violence and repression and applying increased economic pressure on the regime. The United Kingdom and the European Union have also provided substantial humanitarian assistance to the people of Syria through our financing of United Nations humanitarian appeals. We now need to find innovative ways of allowing

humanitarian personnel to deliver assistance to those in need to alleviate the appalling situation on the ground.

In Mali and the Sahel, the international community has united to face the challenge posed by violent extremism. Building on the success of French-led action in support of Mali's territorial integrity, the Council is working towards the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation once conditions are right. The European Union will deploy a military training mission to build the capacity of the Malian armed forces to deliver stability in support of democratic governance.

European Union action in Mali, founded on its comprehensive strategy for security and development in the Sahel, continues to support those efforts by delivering vital humanitarian assistance and building security and development for people in Mali and across the region.

In all those endeavours, the European Union works hand in hand with the United Nations, particularly the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Romano Prodi, and with the Special Representative for West Africa, Said Djinnit.

The European Union and the United Nations are also working closely to implement resolution 1325 (2000), including promoting the role of women in peacebuilding and tackling impunity for sexual violence. In Mali, the United Kingdom will contribute human rights experts to the European Union military training mission to provide specialist training to the Malian armed forces on preventing and responding to sexual violence. The new United Nations Office in Mali will have a strong human rights component, which we hope will also focus closely on issues of gender and sexual violence.

In Somalia, international action in support of the Somali Government has already delivered significant gains. Here the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has led the fight against extremism, in the form of Al-Shabaab, but has been supported by both the European Union and the United Nations through troop salaries from the EU Africa Peace Facility and logistical support from the United Nations Support Office for AMISOM.

That is a good example of the EU and the United Nations working together to make a difference and to address a major challenge to international peace and security. The European Union is making a further contribution by providing training for 3,000 troops to

build up Somalia's own armed forces to fight alongside AMISOM.

We now have a real opportunity to make progress in Somalia, which we look to the United Nations, the African Union and the EU together to seize in the coming months.

As many of us in this Chamber have noted already, 2013 will be a critical year for the Middle East peace process. The European Union has worked closely with the United Nations as members of the Quartet on a number of initiatives, including delivering practical assistance to the Palestinian State-building programme and calling on Israel to ease restrictions on movement and access to the West Bank and Gaza. The EU rightly continues to underline that a political solution must be reached and remains committed to working with the United Nations, other Quartet members and the wider international community to make progress.

The United Kingdom warmly welcomes the tireless efforts of Baroness Ashton in support of the E3+3 negotiations with Iran and the continued work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The countries of the E3+3 are scheduled to meet Iran in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 26 February, to present a balanced and credible offer. The onus is firmly on Iran to come to the next talks ready to negotiate seriously and to take concrete steps to respond to international concerns over its nuclear programme.

The Security Council has adopted six resolutions on the Iranian nuclear issue, four of which contain sanctions. European Union countries have fully implemented those measures and have agreed further sanctions in support of the E3+3 Governments' dual-track strategy of pressure and engagement.

We also welcome Baroness Ashton's engagement in driving forward the European Union-facilitated dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo. It is important that the momentum is maintained to get both countries to reach the conditionalities set out in the December General Affairs Council conclusions, notably with regard to northern Kosovo. That process of dialogue offers the best prospect for consolidating recent progress and generating the necessary understandings and cooperation between Serbia and Kosovo, from which both countries and the region as a whole will benefit.

If recent history has taught us anything, it is that the international community acts most effectively

where it acts coherently. Action by the European Union and cooperation between the European Union and others, including the United Nations, continue to make an important contribution to those efforts.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking Baroness Ashton for her briefing, which underscored the many and various contributions of the European Union in cooperation with the United Nations to the promotion of peace and development throughout the world.

Togo welcomes the organization of today's briefing, in the context of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. It is being held, I would recall, after the sixth consultative meeting on cooperation on peace and security between the United Nations and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, which took place on 13 June 2012 in New York.

In my country's view, those types of meetings show the need to further tighten the bonds between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, allowing those organizations to share, with the Security Council in particular, their experiences and lessons learned as regional stakeholders with real knowledge of the reality on the ground.

There are many examples of the cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations, which is one of the major development strategies of the Common European Security and Defence Policy, whose principles were set by the European Council in Nice in 2000. We recall that, at the operational level, since the success of Operation Artemis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which was carried out in accordance with resolution 1484 (2003) during the deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, many other military and civilian operations have been developed by the European Union in collaboration with United Nations missions on practically all continents.

With regard to security sector reform, we welcome the European Union's support in working with the United Nations in countries such as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Guinea Bissau.

In terms of counter-piracy efforts, Operation Atalanta, which was led by the European Union pursuant to resolutions 1814 (2008), 1816 (2008), 1838 (2008) and 1846 (2008) off the shores of Somalia, helped protect World Food Programme vessels that were sending humanitarian assistance to Somalia. Togo hopes that

that type of cooperation will also lead to determined action to assist the countries and organizations of the Gulf of Guinea, which are still suffering from the effects of piracy. We hope therefore that the upcoming summit on piracy in the Gulf, which will be held in April, will provide an opportunity to establish the areas of that cooperation.

The involvement of the European Union in promoting the objectives of the United Nations is not only operational. Indeed, the comprehensive approach adopted by the European Union aimed at preventing and managing crises by combining the diplomatic and political dimensions and the element of cooperation in development with operational measures is commendable.

With regard to financing, as Baroness Ashton just recalled, the European Union contributes almost half of the resources of the United Nations Development Programme and 80 per cent of those of the Peacebuilding Fund and is one of the major contributors to peacekeeping operations. In that regard, we welcome the announcement of financial support in the amount of €50 million through the African Peace Facility to support the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) and the European Union training mission for the Malian army and its logistical support for the Mission. We hope that in AFISMA's transition to a United Nations peacekeeping operation, the European Union is planning to play an important role in mobilizing the necessary finances and logistical resources.

With regard to preventive diplomacy, my country especially welcomes the efforts of the European Union in a number of areas, including the Iranian nuclear issue and the rapprochement between Kosovo and Serbia.

In conclusion, I would like to say that, while the cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations has been dynamic, thanks to the daily exchanges between the two Secretariats, we hope that the close cooperation will continue to grow and become more significant.

Moreover, the fact that the European Union occasionally does not speak with one voice on some major international issues hinders vigorous cooperation with the United Nations. A comprehensive diplomatic strategy, both for defence and all global issues, would make the European Union a better partner in the resolution of the major crises that are shaking

our world, in particular in the Middle East and North Africa, regions that are so close to Europe.

Finally, in order to prevent the actions of the two Organizations from overlapping in some areas, it is important that both Organizations bear in mind what the other is doing before making a new commitment. In that regard, it is important that due account be taken, in developing a comprehensive United Nations strategy for the Sahel, of the European Union's strategy on the Sahel, which has the advantage of showing the inextricable link between security and development.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union. For us, today's meeting is important both from the standpoint of the role played by the European Union (EU) in collective efforts to support international peace and security and from the standpoint of the strategic relations linking Russia and the European Union — both major continental centres of power with great responsibilities for the situation in Europe and, more broadly, in the Euro-Atlantic region. In that context, we are generally satisfied with the way our dialogue with the European Union has evolved, including at high-level summits. We note some proximity in our positions on many international issues on the agenda of the Security Council.

The Russian Federation has consistently advocated multilateral development and improvements in the cooperation of the United Nations with regional and subregional organizations. That cooperation must be based on the firm foundation of the Charter of the United Nations, especially, its Chapter VIII.

The European Union contributes to strengthening multilateralism, with the United Nations playing the lead role, in combating new threats and challenges, mitigating the consequences of natural disasters and eliminating poverty and discrimination. We note the useful role played by the European Union as a major donor of development and humanitarian assistance and their significant contribution towards financing peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding.

We value the participation of the European Union in international efforts to help Somalia, Afghanistan and Mali, in the Middle East peace process and in looking for political and diplomatic solutions to the Iranian nuclear programme, as well as in combatting

piracy at sea and in establishing regional counter-piracy capacities.

The inspiring potential of the European Union must therefore be used for the good of the international community and not for compelling individual members of the United Nations to take positions on certain issues at odds with their own national policies. The question of observing human rights must not become a pretext for selective political pressure.

General Assembly resolution 65/276, adopted in May 2011, did not change the EU's observer status; it merely expanded some of its capacity to participate in the Assembly's work. The resolution should be interpreted holistically rather than as a series of separate positions. We call on the European Union to follow the resolution strictly in both letter and spirit.

We are concerned about the European Union's increasingly active use of unilateral sanctions, both those imposed in addition to United Nations sanctions and those implemented without any corresponding Security Council decisions. In our view, such sanctions are counterproductive; they undermine the Council's prerogative and add to the burden placed on the populations of the countries on which they are imposed. Frankly, at times such actions amount to attempts to stifle entire sectors of the economies of independent States, and the humanitarian assistance that the EU sometimes provides is only partial compensation for such losses.

Having taken upon itself a specific role in organizing a dialogue on Kosovo, the EU should not stray into acts of pressure or force; such relapses have sometimes been observed in the region. Solving Kosovo's complex problems should not be effected only by the EU at the expense of the United Nations presence, whose role, as prescribed in resolution 1244 (1999), cannot be seen as an auxiliary or second-tier one.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that, despite the growing need for an effective mechanism for the division of labour between the United Nations and regional organizations, including the EU, the leading role of the Security Council on issues of the maintenance of international peace and security remains unshakeable. It is enshrined in the United Nations Charter, and to change it is out of the question.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you for convening this meeting, Mr. President, and to thank the High Representative

for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union, Baroness Catherine Ashton, for her briefing.

The Republic of Argentina welcomes cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, in this case, the European Union. In establishing the Security Council as the organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peacekeeping and security, the Charter of the United Nations, in Chapter VIII, also provided for a role for regional agreements or bodies, particularly in seeking peaceful solutions to disputes, as long as such agreements and bodies and their activities are compatible with the purposes and principles of the United Nations and as long as the Security Council is kept fully informed of whatever activities are undertaken or planned by such regional agreements and bodies for maintaining international peace and security. We would like to see the meetings now being held with the European Union and the African Union extended with similar regularity to other regional and subregional bodies that also deal with matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.

I would now like to discuss a few of the issues mentioned by Ms. Ashton in her briefing. Over the past two years both the Government and the opposition groups in Syria have chosen to try to resolve the crisis there by military means. One of the most worrying results of that decision has been the catastrophic humanitarian situation that exists not only in Syria but also in neighbouring countries, which continue to receive an endless influx of refugees. In that regard, we must recognize the solidarity shown by the European Union and its member States in continuing to respond to that humanitarian tragedy. Argentina believes that the unacceptable levels of violence and destruction in Syria have been largely enabled by the assistance provided by external players in arming and financing the parties to the conflict. In that regard, we concur with the appeal made by the Council of the European Union in its conclusions adopted on 15 October in Luxembourg for all States to refrain from sending arms to Syria.

Briefly, with respect to the peace process in the Middle East, I would like to say that my country holds and has always held a clear position. We consider it crucial to work towards a two-State solution and essential to renew and strengthen the mechanisms and strategies that the international community has developed to contribute effectively to that goal, with the understanding, as our President has said, that the

question of finding a peaceful solution in the Middle East should not be seen as a regional conflict but as a universal issue.

We also support Ms. Ashton's comments on the nuclear test carried out by North Korea and on that we do not have to speak in depth. Both the Argentinian authorities and the Security Council have made clear, forceful and prudent statements on the matter. Regarding non-proliferation, as in other cases that have arisen, Argentina is of the view that the issue should be resolved through effective negotiations. As the High Representative said, the imposition of sanctions cannot be an end in itself, and we share that position; they must be supported by negotiations. We believe that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is the cornerstone of a coherent non-proliferation regime and that all States should support it.

In that context, I would like to point out that Argentina has a very clear historical commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation. We are party to all of the export-control regimes and firmly support the efforts of the international community in that area. We do, however, understand that such efforts cannot be used as indirect means for limiting the inalienable rights of States that are party to the Treaty to develop, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In the case of Iran, Argentina believes that that country should cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency in order to regain the trust of the international community regarding the nature of its nuclear programme.

Argentina takes note of the crisis in Mali and recognizes the European Union's initiative on the issue. We have always stressed that a medium- and long-term solution to the Mali crisis cannot be a military one; we should prioritize the political process by holding free, fair and transparent elections as soon as conditions allow, as well as an inclusive dialogue as a necessary condition for the restoration of the rule of law, constitutional order and full enjoyment of human rights. We also believe that it is important to make progress with regard to the country's development in order to ensure security in the medium and long term. In that regard, initiatives such as the Brussels conference held on 5 February on the future of Mali and the announced resumption of the European Union's assistance for development are all measures worthy of note.

I cannot conclude without mentioning the European Union's support for the work of the Security Council in the area of women and peace and security, which the Ambassador of Luxembourg also remarked on. Issues concerning children and armed conflict and every area related to sexual and gender-based violence are a priority for Argentina, and we attach great importance to them within the framework of our human rights policy. In that respect, I would like to recognize the fact that the European Union is one of the parties that is most committed to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security. Like my own country, the European Union itself and more than half of its member States have adopted action plans on women and peace and security.

Finally, the promotion and protection of the rights of the child are a priority of European Union human rights policy, as can be seen in its many efforts to provide critical assistance to children affected by conflict and for the demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers.

My country is a member of the International Criminal Court and has signed the Rome Statute. When it comes to the recruitment of children under the age of 15 to be used to play an active role in hostilities, the Statute states that such children are the victims of a war crime. Argentina has set that age in line with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We know that international human rights instruments are a bare minimum, not a ceiling.

In conclusion, I reiterate the importance that my delegation attaches to this dialogue with regional and subregional organizations in the framework of the central role of the Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (spoke in French): At the outset, I would like to welcome Baroness Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and to thank her for her briefing on the contribution of the European Union to the achievement of United Nations goals, in particular the prevention of conflict, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

On the basis of its status as a model of integration and its concrete and substantial commitment to peace, development and the respect for human rights, the European Union remains a privileged partner of the

United Nations. The Nobel Peace Prize awarded to it is eloquent testimony to that fact.

Today's debate continues the recent momentum launched by the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations aimed at strengthening their partnerships in order to deal with active or latent conflicts and multifaceted crises that destabilize entire regions and affect millions of people. Morocco attaches great importance to the role of regional and subregional organizations and to the cooperation of those organizations with the United Nations, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and within the parameters established by Council resolutions.

The European Union has contributed significantly to efforts to promote the resolution of conflicts. Its cooperation projects and its economic and technical assistance provide significant support to socioeconomic development efforts. The work of the European Union aimed at entrenching stability and democracy strengthens international peace and security. With its influence and experience, the instruments it has established and its special relations with several regions of the world, the European Union can continue to provide essential support to international peace and security and to the strengthening of United Nations multilateralism.

In that regard, I would like to highlight the importance of the European Neighbourhood Policy, which seeks to strengthen Europe's relations with countries to the east and south; the Union for the Mediterranean, the goal of which is to promote economic integration and democratic institutions in the 16 countries of the Mediterranean basin; and the Instrument for Stability, which has strengthened European efforts aimed at preventing conflicts, managing crises and peacebuilding.

Morocco welcomes the efforts of the European Union to support international and regional efforts aimed at resolving the conflict in the Middle East, in particular through its contribution as a member of the Middle East Quartet. We believe that the European Union will continue to support the Middle East peace process and work to clear away the obstacles to the resumption of negotiations, so that the Palestinian people can fully enjoy its legitimate rights, including the establishment of its State, with East Jerusalem as its capital. All the people of the region, together with the international community, hope that 2013 will be the year of the prompt and effective implementation of the

vision of two States, Palestine and Israel, living side by side. No effort must be spared in making that vision a reality that is experienced by all peoples of the region, for the good of all.

The Kingdom of Morocco welcomes the sustained and ongoing commitment of the European Union to peace, security and development on the African continent. That commitment is not a new one. It has been progressively strengthened over the past decade to become an important vehicle for stabilization and development for countries in crisis or emerging from crisis, as shown by all of the work that the European Union has undertaken or continues to undertake in Africa, whether it is in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, the larger Sahel region or, recently, Mali.

With respect to the crisis in Mali, the swiftness of the French and African response was decisive. The European Union, for its part, has shown its commitment to stand with the Malian people and all of Africa, in particular through its support it has given to the reform of the Malian security forces, the contribution it announced at the donors conference and the announcement made as recently as yesterday by the European ministers for development of the progressive resumption of its development aid to Mali following the adoption of the Malian transitional road map.

The situation in Mali cannot be understood outside of its regional context, namely, that of the Sahel. The region is confronted with multifaceted and complex challenges. We hope that, once it is laid out, the comprehensive United Nations strategy for the Sahel will also receive the active support of the European Union.

With respect to the Syrian Arab Republic, we welcome the humanitarian assistance from Europe for Syrian refugees, and we call on the European Union to continue its efforts, in cooperation with the United Nations and the League of Arab States, aimed at putting an end to the horrific situation of the Syrian people by bringing about an end to the violence and by facilitating an agreement on a political solution ensuring a transition, in response to the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people and in full respect for the country's territorial integrity and national unity. In that respect, it is important to support the work of Joint Special Representative Brahimi and to ensure that the

Security Council can take unified action to put an end to the suffering of the Syrian people.

Morocco supports and contributes to international and regional disarmament and non-proliferation efforts and to the development and implementation of a collective response to global threats, including terrorism. The weakening of the non-proliferation regime threatens to put the goal of nuclear disarmament, to which Morocco remains committed, out of reach. Based on its belief in the virtue of dialogue and diplomacy, Morocco supports the E3+3 dialogue and hopes that the Almaty meeting will make further progress towards arriving at a diplomatic solution for the Iranian nuclear issue.

At this point I wish to reiterate the importance of getting all Middle Eastern States to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency. We also count upon the European Union's support of efforts to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Morocco, which enjoys advanced status in its relations with the European Union, values its commitment. We hope that the EU's cooperation with our Organization will strengthen both Organizations, as that is in the interest of the European Union, the United Nations and even beyond — it is in the interest of the entire international community.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): I would like to join others in welcoming High Representative Ashton to the Council today, and I thank her very much for her remarks. The European Union (EU) remains an indispensable partner to the United Nations and to the United States. It is an important leader in international efforts to address the world's most pressing challenges. Today's briefing illustrates the considerable benefits that strong United Nations partnerships with regional organizations can generate in the interest of advancing our goals of international peace and security.

I would like to highlight four areas that we find most noteworthy. First, the United States appreciates the EU's leadership in promoting stability in the European region. The EU has played a very important role in assisting Kosovo and Serbia in normalizing relations through dialogue, bringing together Prime Ministers Đurić and Thaçi for discussions as well as facilitating the historic meeting between Presidents Nikolić and Jahjaga.

We agree with High Representative Ashton that that dialogue has produced concrete results that will promote stability in the region. A resolution of the differences between Kosovo and Serbia will allow both countries to move forward on their respective European paths. We also welcome the efforts of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo in helping to strengthen Kosovo's institutions.

We also commend the EU for its ongoing engagement in Georgia, particularly through its monitoring mission. We appreciate the joint efforts of the United Nations, the EU and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) over the past several years to help create space for direct dialogue between Georgia and Russia to address outstanding concerns and normalize relations. And we deeply appreciate the EU's contribution to peace and security in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the Security Council-mandated European Union-led peacekeeping force.

Secondly, the United States welcomes the EU's efforts to advance peace and security beyond Europe. The Iranian nuclear issue remains a matter of serious concern for the entire world. We must continue to consult and work together to ensure that Iran cooperates seriously with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), comes clean about its past and present nuclear activities and reassures the international community about its nuclear programme, including by complying with relevant Security Council resolutions and its nuclear safeguards obligations.

We are pleased that the Iranian negotiating team has confirmed that the next round of talks between the five plus one group and Iran will take place in Almaty on 26 February. We appreciate the critical role that High Representative Ashton has played in our diplomacy to address that issue. It is time for Iran to discuss substance, and we hope the talks will make concrete progress regarding the international community's concerns about the nature of Iran's nuclear programme.

Also, we greatly appreciate High Representative Ashton's statement that the European Union strongly condemns the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's latest nuclear test and urges that country to refrain from further provocative actions. The United States will continue to take the steps required to defend ourselves and our allies. We will strengthen close coordination with allies and partners and work with our Six-Party Talks partners, the Security Council and other United Nations Member States to pursue firm action.

The EU is also a valued partner in the Middle East peace efforts, including as a member of the Quartet, which supports a comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. We remain committed to working with our EU partners, including through the Quartet, to encourage the parties to create an atmosphere conducive to the resumption of direct negotiations without preconditions. Only through direct negotiations between the parties can Palestinians and Israelis address all permanent status issues and achieve the peace that both deserve.

Turning to Syria, we fully share the concerns expressed by High Representative Ashton regarding the ongoing violence, grave humanitarian rights abuses and war crimes, and we agree that the international community must come together to help end the suffering of the people of Syria. The United States joins the EU in continuing its support for the efforts of Joint Special Representative Brahimi to find a durable political solution to the crisis in Syria.

Thirdly, the United States welcomes the EU's commitment to provide technical assistance to bolster security and development in societies emerging from conflict. In Afghanistan, the EU's expertise on policing issues has been critical in assisting Afghanistan in establishing and training an effective civilian police force. The EU's efforts complement the work of the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the United States and other international actors working with Afghanistan to promote a stronger political, security, economic and social future for the Afghan people.

In Mali, the United States welcomes the EU's pledge to provide financial and logistical support to the African-led International Support Mission in Mali through the African Peace Facility. We commend the EU for its commitment through the EU training mission in Mali to train the Malian defence and security forces, with an emphasis on civilian oversight, the protection of civilians and respect for human rights. And we welcome the EU's efforts, in coordination with the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and other partners, to resolve Mali's interrelated political and security challenges through the Support and Follow-up Group on the Situation in Mali.

In the wider region, the EU strategy for security and development in the Sahel, which is focused on capacity-building and countering violent extremism,

complements the United States regional approach, including through the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership, to strengthen the capacity of Governments across the Sahel to better address threats to peace and security.

Finally, we strongly support the EU's efforts to promote and protect human rights, both in its bilateral engagements and through the United Nations. The United States shares the EU's commitment to promoting and protecting the fundamental human freedoms, such as freedom of expression, combating gender-based discrimination and violence, and promoting the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals. Respect for human rights is the cornerstone of stable democratic societies and essential to regional and international peace and security.

In closing, the United States reiterates its commitment to working with the European Union in support of United Nations principles and activities in the maintenance of peace and security around the world.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): At the outset, let me thank Baroness Catherine Ashton, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union, for her statement. Rwanda views positively these regular interactions between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, particularly the European Union (EU) and, in my region, the African Union (AU).

From the ashes of the Second World War, Europeans decided to come together and establish an economic and political union, which, five decades later, has succeeded in establishing peace and security on the continent, despite certain challenges such as Kosovo or Cyprus. Here, I would like again to commend Baroness Ashton for her role as mediator in bringing the Prime Ministers of Kosovo and Serbia together in Brussels for a fourth meeting on political dialogue.

Based on its experience in making and building peace at home, the EU has been collaborating effectively with the United Nations, supporting peace and security outside the continent, particularly in Africa. In that regard, the African Peace Facility is playing an important role in equipping Africa with the necessary tools and means to prevent conflict on the continent, notably through capacity-building and support for an early warning system.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the action of the EU in Mali and in the Sahel. We have welcomed the decision to establish an EU training mission in Mali aimed at building the capacity of the Malian forces and providing financial and logistical support for the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA). Similarly, I commend the EU for its continuing engagement in Somalia and the Horn of Africa, particularly by supporting the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

In peacekeeping operations, Rwanda values the triangular cooperation of the AU, the EU and the United Nations. Support by the EU, mainly in the form of capacity-building, planning and financial support, has provided robustness to peacekeeping in Africa, particularly the AU-led missions AFISMA and AMISOM. Most of the time, support has been ad hoc, fragmented and sometimes politicized. There is, therefore, a need for a more coordinated, coherent, predictable and sustained United Nations and EU support to AU with a view to assisting the AU to resolve its structural and capacity challenges.

In conflict and post-conflict situations, the European Union has consistently advocated for the rule of law; protection of civilians, particularly for women and children; responsibility to protect human rights; and accountability. We share all those principles, as they are universal values that should guide each of us. In order better to achieve those goals, however, it is important that the EU and other partners give priority to peace and political dialogue, while strengthening the capacity of national jurisdictions. International justice and universal jurisdictions, when used genuinely, are important as means to end impunity for the most serious crimes. They should, however, be the last resort.

I conclude by once again commending the EU for its effective and important collaboration with both the United Nations and the AU in peace and security. We look forward to sustained and strengthened collaboration.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Republic of Korea.

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome Baroness Ashton to the Security Council.

The Republic of Korea highly appreciates the positive contributions that the European Union (EU) has made to the work of the Security Council, with its expertise in the areas of conflict prevention,

crisis management, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and respect for human rights. Given the scope of the challenges we face today, such effective cooperation between the two Organizations is of utmost importance in managing crises across the world.

In that regard, we welcome the active role played by the European Union in maintaining international peace and security in its region and beyond, from the Balkans and the Caucasus to the Middle East, North Africa and Asia. Above all, we applaud the EU's increased role in promoting political dialogue and peaceful reconciliation.

Particularly worthy of note is the ongoing EU-facilitated dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. We welcome that the presidents of Kosovo and Serbia have held their first meeting, mediated by Baroness Ashton. We believe that that first highest-level meeting is itself a meaningful step towards the normalization of bilateral relations, and we encourage the EU to continue its efforts in that regard.

The EU has also made great efforts towards resolving issues relating to the proliferation of sensitive nuclear activities on the part of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Those efforts have included the EU sanctions regime and the dialogue with Iran within the framework of E3+3 Governments negotiations. We hope that the EU's efforts will bear fruit in the near future.

The Republic of Korea appreciates the firm position that the European Union has consistently demonstrated regarding North Korea's nuclear programme. North Korea's recent third nuclear test — the two previous tests were in 2006 and 2009 — constitutes a clear and blatant violation of relevant Security Council resolutions and other international norms. We are quite confident that the Security Council, along with the international community, remains united in resolutely reacting and taking firm measures. Sharing a strong sense of solidarity in that regard, we look forward to the EU's continuing role in presenting the position of the international community towards the North Korean nuclear weapons development programme.

The Israeli-Palestinian issue is another important agenda item. The Israeli general election will soon result in the formation of a new Government. Fatah and Hamas are once again moving towards reconciliation. At this juncture, my delegation is of the view that now is the right time for the parties to reinvigorate the peace process by taking a new initiative.

As Baroness Ashton highlighted, the deadly clashes in the Syrian Arab Republic demand our constant attention. In Syria the death toll is still rising, and the number of people in need of external assistance is increasing every minute. Although recently the possibility of negotiations has been cautiously suggested by actors in Syria, the positions of each side still seem far apart. Both the United Nations and the EU have critical stakes in resolving the crisis in Syria and in preventing the situation from spreading into a regional conflict. Despite internal disagreement, the Security Council will continue its sincere efforts to forge common ground with a view to making an appropriate response.

Another situation of special interest to the Republic of Korea is that of Mali. We value the contribution of the EU in addressing the crisis in Mali in close cooperation with the United Nations and other regional partners. In that regard, we welcome that the EU, together with the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, convened a ministerial meeting of the Support and Follow-up Group on the Situation of Mali on 5 February in Brussels. The EU's financial support for the rapid deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali and the economic development of Mali demonstrates its commitment to support the people of Mali on their path back to freedom and development. We also commend the EU's initiative to share its military expertise by deploying a military training mission for the Malian forces in the coming days.

We also appreciate the crucial role that the EU is playing in maintaining and strengthening peace and stability in Somalia in cooperation with the United Nations.

Before concluding, the Republic of Korea would like to applaud the EU's positive contribution in addressing global threats and challenges and sincerely hopes that it will further strengthen its close partnership with the Security Council, thereby making a substantial contribution to international peace and security.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to Baroness Ashton to respond to the comments.

Baroness Ashton: Thank you, Mr. President. I will be very brief.

I just want to say again what a privilege it is to be here at the Security Council and to have had not only an opportunity to describe some of the pressing issues and how the European Union is responding to them, but also the pleasure of listening to members of the Council, both in a complimentary manner, for which I thank them, and in our common cause of trying to find the right solutions.

I end by simply repeating what I said in my remarks — that we will remain a steadfast partner of the United Nations. We will continue to work with the United Nations, as well as other organizations, in the pursuit of conflict prevention and resolution for a peaceful and more secure world.

The President: There are no more speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.



Security Council

Sixty-eighth year

Provisional

6920th meeting

 Thursday, 14 February 2013, 10 a.m.
 New York

President: Mr. Kim Sook (Republic of Korea)

Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Ms. King
	Azerbaijan	Mr. Musayev
	China	Mr. Tian Lin
	France	Mr. Araud
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

13-23352 (E)



Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Sudan to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2013/92, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Australia, France, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, China, France, Guatemala, Luxembourg, Morocco, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Togo, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2091 (2013).

I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Osman (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall be brief. First, I should like to inform the members of the Security Council that the Sudan has cooperated with the sanctions Committee and the Panel of Experts since they were created in 2005. The Sudan intends to pursue that cooperation, but we note that if any member of the Panel of Experts should become involve in any activity that threatens our national security, we shall be entitled to refuse to cooperate with that member, who will need to be replaced by someone who will work in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In resolution 2091 (2013), just adopted, the Security Council expresses its concern that the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer to the Sudan of technical assistance and support, including training, financial or other assistance and the provision of spare parts, weapons systems and related materiel, could be used by the Government of the Sudan to support military aircraft being used in violation of resolutions 1556 (2005) and 1591 (2005). This concern is based on false premises, since the Sudan uses its aircraft for purely peaceful, civilian purposes.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.



Security Council

Sixty-eighth year

Provisional

6921st meeting

Thursday, 14 February 2013, 10.15 a.m.

New York

President: Mr. Kim Sook (Republic of Korea)

Members:

Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
Australia	Ms. King
Azerbaijan	Mr. Musayev
China	Mr. Tian Lin
France	Mr. Araud
Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
Togo	Mr. Menan
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2013/69)

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13-23358 (E)



Please recycle



The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda.

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2013/69)

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Somalia to participate in this meeting. On behalf of the Council, I welcome Her Excellency Ms. Fowsiyo Yusuf Haji Adan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Somalia.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2013/69, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on Somalia.

I now give the floor to Mr. Zerihoun.

Mr. Zerihoun: I thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on recent developments in Somalia and on the next stage of the United Nations engagement in the country.

In the weeks since the finalization of the Secretary-General's report of 31 January 2013 (S/2013/69), the Federal Government of Somalia has continued implementing its six-pillar policy for stabilization and peacebuilding in the country. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has reached out to Somalia's international partners, with high-profile visits including to the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union, which have raised hopes for enhanced international assistance on the basis of a new compact to be developed over the course of this year.

The United Nations has continued high-level dialogue with the new authorities in Somalia on their emerging plans. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, met with President Mohamud in Addis Ababa during the recent African Union summit and visited Mogadishu on

30 January. He discussed with the Prime Minister of Somalia and other leaders their priorities for the coming year, particularly in the areas of security, judicial reform and public financial management. We hope to continue to work together to develop ways to support Somalia in these key areas.

The success achieved by the Government internationally is matched by daunting challenges at home. The growing expanse of territory liberated from Al-Shabaab has created an opportunity for the federal Government to extend its control over the country and enhance its legitimacy among Somalis. The Government is working to fill the vacuum through an inclusive bottom-up approach, but the process is naturally contentious. In Kismaayo, the self-styled Governor, Sheikh Madobe, has yet to meet with President Mohamud, despite promises to do so. Meanwhile, in Baidoa tensions are escalating following the appointment of a new interim Governor by the Government on 6 February.

It is important that progress be made quickly to build accepted administrations in the liberated areas and that the complex political process be accompanied by other critical stabilization deliverables — notably security, law and order, and basic service delivery — without which long-term peace and development will be difficult to attain. In this regard, the commitment of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) on 23 January to support and ensure complementarity with the approach of the federal Government of Somalia, as well as the Government's pledge to present its detailed stabilization plan to IGAD, are welcome developments.

Despite several attacks by Al-Shabaab, there is now a tangible sense of security and optimism in Mogadishu. Across the country, AMISOM is now deployed at full mandated strength and has been effective in degrading Al-Shabaab's operational capability. However, Al-Shabaab is not yet defeated, and its presence continues to hamper the freedom of movement of Somalis and those who would assist them.

The lack of sustainable and predictable funding for AMISOM remains a concern. The international community continues to recognize the sacrifices being made by the Somali forces, AMISOM and other partners, and strongly supports the appeals of the African Union (AU) for resources and additional capabilities to continue efforts against the insurgency.

Meanwhile, Council members are aware of the request of the Somali Government for a relaxation of the arms embargo to facilitate the development of the Somalia security sector. The Secretary-General suggests in his report that it would be important to take a calibrated approach based on all the factors at play, including the pressing need to support the development of the Somali forces while avoiding the proliferation of uncontrolled weapons that could exacerbate the security situation. We understand that the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group is ready to provide technical advice in the development of options in this regard.

The development of the security sector in Somalia must also be coupled with enhanced support for the judiciary and respect for human rights. The Secretary-General is particularly concerned by the ongoing threat to journalists working in Somalia and by the number of reported incidents of sexual violence. The case of an alleged rape victim and a Somali journalist sentenced to imprisonment on 5 February underscores the considerable investment needed to develop a national framework that promotes international human rights norms.

This period of transformation, with its opportunities and challenges, requires a step change in the United Nations support to peacebuilding in Somalia. In his report before the Council, the Secretary-General has recommended a substantial realignment of the United Nations presence in Somalia. The recommendations are based on an integrated strategic assessment conducted last year, in which the Secretariat listened extensively to the Somali authorities across the country, to civil society organizations and to international partners in Somalia and in Nairobi. Extensive consultations were also held with the African Union.

The findings of the review emphasize that United Nations support to Somalia must now be based on a new partnership, with the Somalis in the lead and the United Nations working side by side with them, not remotely from Nairobi. That is why United Nations entities will be steadily relocating to Somalia over the next 6 to 12 months.

The United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) has played a critical role in supporting the Somalis to deliver the transition. The political successes of last year were delivered in part through the hard work of UNPOS, and especially the tireless efforts of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Augustine Mahiga. But UNPOS is not configured to provide the

support required by a new Government seeking to consolidate its authority across the country. That will require a new mission with the political and technical expertise, resources and configuration to support the Government and people of Somalia. The Secretary-General therefore recommends to the Security Council the liquidation of UNPOS and the establishment of a broader peacebuilding mission based in Mogadishu.

The envisaged tasks of the new mission include good offices, advice and assistance on security, peacebuilding and State-building, the preparation of elections, human rights and the rule of law, and assistance to the coordination of international assistance. The United Nations will bring unique expertise to assist in these areas. At the same time, there is need for innovative approaches to tackle the particular challenges of operating in Somalia, and to tailor our efforts to the Government's requirements. For this reason, and further to the guidance of the Council, the Secretary-General intends to deploy a technical design mission to develop detailed plans for the future United Nations presence in Somalia. He will report on the findings in his next report to the Security Council in May this year.

We appreciate the advice of Member States and other international partners on the types of structural models to pursue with respect to the new United Nations presence in Somalia. The Secretary-General's recommendation for a United Nations assistance mission — which is option C in his report — reflects the best current option for the Organization to simultaneously provide enhanced support to peacebuilding and to meet other development and humanitarian objectives. The option recognizes the importance of maintaining the high level of support provided by the United Nations Support Office for AMISOM to the African Union Mission in Somalia, while strengthening the strategic coherence of the Mission, and tactical planning and cooperation with United Nations agencies and the African Union.

The Secretary-General remains committed to full structural integration as soon as conditions allow, and to keeping the option of a United Nations peacekeeping operation under review for the future. In view of the dynamic situation in Somalia, the Secretary-General intends to revisit the issue of structural integration next year.

The partnership between the African Union and United Nations in Somalia has been one of the success stories in our relationship. We remain committed to

working with our African Union colleagues over the coming months to ensure that our approaches are coherent, supportive of each other and, most important, provide the best support to the Somali Government and people. The United Nations and African Union have each conducted their own reviews of their respective efforts and engagement in Somalia, and our substantive conclusions are similar. At the meeting of the AU-United Nations Joint Task Force, held in the margins of the recent AU Summit in Addis Ababa, we agreed to pursue a joint position on the outcome of our respective reviews, as well as the next steps for our future cooperation. We will keep the Security Council informed of these efforts and their outcome.

Only the people of Somalia can realize the transformation that we all hope for in their country, but the United Nations can have a significant supporting role to play. We look forward to receiving the guidance of the Security Council on the future United Nations presence and engagement in Somalia.

The President: I thank Mr. Zerihoun for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Somalia.

Ms. Adan (Somalia): I wish to thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to address this Council and to share with you current events shaping the destiny of Somalia. Allow me also to congratulate you on assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month.

First and foremost, the Somali people, for the first time in more than two decades, are speaking of new hopes, optimism, confidence and strong faith in the new developments in our homeland. It is my ardent wish and hope that my Government will prove the Somali people right in their aspirations.

Let me say a few words about the current situation in Somalia. The rise of a new dawn in Somalia started with the successful end of the transition and the laying of the foundations for credible and viable governance structures. Today, we have a fully functioning and lean Government, with a robust and lively legislature. The well-known conflict and acrimony among Somali leaders is something of the past and a cooperative atmosphere prevails.

At the very outset beginning, my Government adopted a six-pillar policy framework based on our collective vision for the way forward. This vision is a

strategy for dealing with such urgent issues as security and peacebuilding, law and good governance reform, economic recovery and public finance management reform, good and targeted service delivery, the restructuring of international relations, and safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia.

The Somali Government has adopted several initiatives and programmes based on these pillars. In the security sector, for example, Government troops, in collaboration with the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), have succeeded in regaining control of areas previously held by Al-Shabaab. Today, Al-Shabaab is weakened and its leadership is in disarray and on the run. We are committed to continuing the fight against this scourge until the final victory is achieved.

We are in the process of establishing local administrations in the newly recovered areas of South and Central Somalia. This is based on a bottom-up approach — in other words, the empowerment of local communities to select their own leaders and the Somali Government as the sole legitimate facilitator, as prescribed in the Constitution. This will promote respect for Somalia's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence; the legitimacy of the federal Government of the Somali Republic; and respect for the wishes of the local populations in those areas.

The Somali Government has also initiated much-needed steps in establishing a credible, transparent and accountable public finance system. The collection of taxes as a major source of Government income is a priority in this regard. We are also working on a programme for the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees in neighbouring countries, as well as the resettlement of internally displaced persons in their areas of original residence.

Despite the progress made in different areas and the multiple tasks ahead, serious challenges remain. We have no illusions about this. Getting rid of the remnants of the Al-Shabaab is a top priority for us. That, however, will require strengthening the military capacity of the Somali defence forces by way of training, providing enablers in a timely manner, and further restructuring command and control structures.

Consolidating peace in the recovered areas in southern Somalia and securing the necessary military and financial resources in a timely manner

is another priority. The lifting of the arms embargo is a prerequisite for attaining this goal. The Somali Government reiterates its request for the arms embargo to be lifted. The Somali Government will put in place the necessary mechanisms to ensure that armaments do not fall into the wrong hands.

We have started strengthening the capacity of State institutions by way of structural adjustments and changes. Yet, further action is required, and this is where the United Nations can step in by providing the physical presence of the specialized agencies on the ground in Somalia and teaming up with line ministries. These and other programmes cannot succeed unless there is the blessing, the political will and the long-term commitment of the international community to stepping up to the plate and partnering with the new Somalia, through the Somali Government, in providing the necessary technical and financial resources.

My Government is pleased to report the continued commitment of and the enormous sacrifices made by the Somali National Security Forces, AMISOM, the Ethiopian National Defence Forces and their international partners for the successful consummation of the transitional road map, and urges greater support to be provided in this regard.

Security is a prerequisite for political, economic and social stabilization and recovery. The gains made by AMISOM and our national armed forces against Al-Shabaab over the past year are impressive, and I wish again to thank the nations that contributed their forces to this courageous endeavour. The support provided by the United Nations to AMISOM has to be acknowledged. We would like to stress again the importance for our forces to be better trained, equipped and structured. The Council's support is required, not least in lifting the arms embargo to allow the Somali national armed forces to assume full responsibility for our own security. In this context, however, we would like to voice and reiterate our strong opposition to the authorization of a maritime force for AMISOM.

We discussed our concerns during the recent African Union (AU) strategic review; our point was understood, and that particular element has been removed from the final report to the AU Peace and Security Council. The naval capability of our forces must be the priority. There is no compelling reason to take the campaign against Al-Shabaab to sea. Piracy, human trafficking and smuggling are important challenges, but they are

not linked to the mandate of AMISOM. This is our task, which needs the Council's support.

With reference to paragraph 51 of the report, dated 17 September 2011, of the eleventh Ordinary Council of Ministers of Defence and Security of the Eastern African Region, held in Seychelles, the Council Ministers of Defence and Security discussed the issue of a maritime component for AMISOM, and Somalia clearly stated its position that it does not need such a component. In view of this, the Council of Ministers of Defence and Security unanimously agreed to Somalia's objection to a maritime component for AMISOM. A copy of this report, signed by all members, is available for easy reference in this Chamber.

Significant progress has been made against piracy, and we thank the international community for the well-coordinated and robust operations that have almost defeated this negative industry. The gains need urgently to be supplemented with programmes aiming at the young people in those communities. This is closely linked to the reintegration of disengaged combatants and youth at risk throughout the country. We will need to urgently invest in our youth in order not to lose the dividend of the military and anti-piracy campaigns.

We also urge the esteemed Council to remove paragraph 38 of the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council (S/2013/69) regarding the implementation of the United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy. The Somali Government sees this particular matter as applying only to our national forces.

The humanitarian situation remains critical for hundreds of thousands of our people. Many are at risk; a million of our citizens remain displaced within the country, and many more have sought refuge elsewhere. We urge the international community to further generously contribute through the United Nations consolidated appeal or other means in order to alleviate the suffering. The drought and the conflict have disrupted the ability of our people to cope. So many lives have been saved by the United Nations and the many humanitarian agencies and friends of Somalia. Let us build on this success and invest in the capacity of our people to take care of themselves. We are strong people and should not be dependent on aid.

The human rights situation needs further urgent attention. We are aware of the shortcomings and the prevailing abuses. Our Government is committed to

moving decisively to ensure that access to basic human rights is guaranteed and that the culture of violence, particularly against women and journalists, is brought to an end.

I would like to reaffirm our support for resolution 2036 (2012) banning the trade in and export of charcoal, and ask the Council to decide to punish the violators of the ban.

Today, and on behalf of the Somali people and the federal Government of the Somali Republic, I stand before the Council to state that the Somali people and Government seek a permanent partnership with the United Nations, its Member States and the entire United Nations family — a partnership for peace, good governance, and socioeconomic, political and cultural cooperation — in a manner that suits both of us, from this moment until the time when we are fully able to stand on our own feet. This underscores the need for a paradigm shift in the manner in which the international community engaged with the former transitional Somali administration.

Let me again thank the United Nations for its long-standing support for Somalia. We would have been nowhere without the persistence of the United Nations system, its agencies and their staff. The gradual return of the United Nations system to Mogadishu has begun over the past year. The regular presence of more and more senior staff has made a difference. We understand the difficulties of such a relocation in a security situation that remains difficult but has now become manageable. I would like to encourage the United Nations and our friends to move decisively to come back. In line with common practice, we will support the United Nations and its Member States by providing security, land, facilities and immunities, as required. United Nations offices and embassies must be relocated to Mogadishu.

At this point, I would like to reiterate our strong position that there must be an integrated United Nations mission, which would help the system to deliver and speak as one. We believe that the advantages of having

a unified structure outweigh by far the concerns of those seeking to maintain the status quo in order to disassociate themselves from the political and military components of the international effort.

Integration would facilitate a coherent approach to peacebuilding, stabilization and support for institutions, which is the strength of the United Nations system. We accept that the integration of the military component can be gradual and begin as soon as the active military campaign is over — which we hope will happen in the months to come. I believe that this is in line with the discussions we held with both the United Nations and the AU strategic review teams. We need clear and lean structures with which we can engage, cooperate and partner. A United Nations presence with a unified structure will be stronger and more efficient and deliver with more vigour. We sincerely hope that our voice is listened to.

The President has made this point in his travels to the region and when visiting the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union and in meetings with their leaders. He has shared his views in writing with the Secretary-General, with whom he also discussed the matter during his recent visit to Addis Abeba. Furthermore, during the forty-sixth Extraordinary Session of the Council of Ministers of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), held in Addis Ababa on 23 January, it was agreed that IGAD's grand stabilization plan was to be integrated into the six-pillar policy framework of the Somali Government in the next six weeks.

To conclude, I would like to extend an invitation to Security Council members to visit Somalia in the near future to witness the dramatic changes and opportunities.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.



Security Council

Sixty-eighth year

Provisional

6922nd meeting

Friday, 15 February 2013, 2.45 p.m.

New York

President: Mr. Kim Sook (Republic of Korea)

Members:

Argentina	Mr. Oyarzábal
Australia	Ms. King
Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
China	Mr. Sun Xiaobo
France	Mrs. Le Fraper du Hellen
Guatemala	Mr. Orellana Zabalza
Luxembourg	Mr. Maes
Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
Togo	Mr. Menan
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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13-23533 (E)



Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 2.50 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

After consultations among Council members, I have been authorized to make the following statement on their behalf.

"The Security Council welcomes President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour's announcement of the launch of the National Dialogue Conference on 18 March and commends those that have engaged constructively in the preparatory stages of the process. The Security Council also welcomes the issuance of a decree regarding the formation of the Executive Bureau for the Mutual Accountability Framework.

"The Security Council reiterates the need for the transitional period to be a Yemeni-led process, underpinned by a commitment to democracy, good governance, rule of law, national reconciliation and respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people in Yemen.

"The Security Council emphasizes the need for the National Dialogue Conference to be conducted in an inclusive manner involving the full participation of all segments of Yemeni society, including representatives from the South and other regions, and the full and effective participation of youth and women, as stipulated in the final report of the Preparatory Committee. The Security Council calls upon all parties to honour the timetable and benchmarks set out in the transition agreement and for all sides to act in good faith, in a peaceful, transparent, constructive and reconciliatory manner. The Security Council maintains its expectation that the National Dialogue Conference will lead to a constitutional referendum and elections by February 2014.

"The Security Council urges all the parties in Yemen to adhere to resolving their differences through dialogue and consultation, reject acts of violence to achieve political goals, refrain from provocations, and fully abide by resolutions 2014 (2011) and 2051 (2012). The Security Council expresses concern over reports of interference in the transition by individuals in Yemen representing the former regime, the former opposition, and others who do not adhere to the guiding principles of the Implementation Mechanism Agreement for the transition process, including former President Ali Abdullah Saleh and former Vice President Ali Salim Al-Beidh. The Security Council reiterates its readiness to consider further measures, including under Article 41 of the United Nations Charter, if actions aimed at undermining the Government of National Unity and the political transition continue.

"The Security Council expresses concern over reports of money and weapons being brought into Yemen from outside for the purpose of undermining the transition.

"The security Council reaffirms its commitment to the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen.

"The Security Council urges the Yemeni Government to pass legislation on transitional justice to support reconciliation without further delay. The Council further urges the need to respect the rule of law and protect human rights, in accordance with Yemen's international legal obligations, particularly those of women and people belonging to vulnerable groups, such as children. The Security Council welcomes in this regard the commitment by the Government to end the recruitment and use of children by the Yemeni security forces through the adoption and implementation of an action plan in line with resolution 1612 (2005).

"The Security Council remains closely engaged on the situation in Yemen and will continue to closely follow the next steps towards a peaceful political transition. In this regard, it welcomes the continued and coordinated efforts of the Gulf Cooperation Council Group of Ten Ambassadors, the Secretary General's good offices, including through Special Adviser Jamal Benomar, the wider diplomatic community, and the next Friends of

Yemen meeting that will take place on 7 March in London. The Security Council underscores the need for continued international support for Yemen's political transition, including through the fulfilment of commitments made by donors to support Yemen."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2013/3.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 3 p.m.



Security Council

Distr.: General
21 February 2013

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 6923rd (closed) meeting of the Security Council

**Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday,
21 February 2013, at 3 p.m.**

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

“On 21 February 2013, the Security Council, pursuant to annex II, sections A and B of resolution 1353 (2001), held its 6923rd meeting in private with the troop- and police-contributing countries to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

“The Security Council and the troop- and police-contributing countries heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Mr. Roger Meece, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

“Members of the Council, Mr. Meece and representatives of participating contributing countries had an exchange of views.”

